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Experiential Learning And The Educational Significance Of The
Aesthetic Dimension: An Interpretative Account Of Augusto Boal's
Theatre Of The Oppressed System Of Practices

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ABSTRACT

This study will explore the nature and the scope of the Theatre of the Oppressed practices within the broader educational terrain of experiential learning. The aim of the study is to extend and elaborate on current established understandings of experiential learning by acknowledging and recognizing the facilitative and educational significance of the aesthetic domain. Although there has been a substantial level of theorizing about experiential learning very little attention has been given to defining the educational uses of the aesthetic domain of experience.

Some experiential learning theorists have acknowledged the multi-dimensional nature of experience and their work supports the use of drama in the context of experiential learning. Yet there is very little theorizing or conceptual framing of the area and the distinctive educational role of the aesthetic domain of experience. It is against this background that this study asks how do we learn from the "experience of drama" and how is this learning different and or similar to our current understandings of experiential learning?

In addition to mapping experiential learning as a distinctive terrain the study signposts the conceptual dimensions of the area by delineating the generic features that set experiential learning apart from other models and theories of learning and instructional practice. Against this background, a review of the Theatre of the Oppressed practices will be undertaken and attention will be given to "image theatre" as a mode of communication that works outside the boundaries of everyday language. The specific properties of the "aesthetic space" are explored and related to the educational implications of the carnivalesque motif that defines the distinctive critical sensibilities of Theatre of the Oppressed. Following this the study moves to a conceptual elaboration of experiential learning and the delineation of the educational and facilitative role of "the aesthetic domain".

While the study's methodology is grounded in Schon's (1987) understanding of the reflective practitioner, there has been a concerted effort to establish an interpretative framework that corresponds with the refractive qualities of Theatre of the Oppressed. The main purpose is the achievement of an illuminative synthesis of perspectives. Short descriptive accounts of practice provide practical "real life" examples, while the philosophical and theoretical contributions of Dewey and Freire are used to establish the discursive parameters of the study. The overall goal of this largely integrative focus is to contribute to the area of adult and continuing education by illuminating an important but so far largely unrecognized area of practice.

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SECTION I

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Overview of Study

1.1 Scope Of Study

In commenting on the role of philosophy in the context of education Arnaud Reid (1965) suggests that in many ways philosophy can be seen as a broad discursive practice that enables educational practitioners to step away from the exigencies and constraints of the everyday practice of teaching and locate their activities in a wider multi-disciplinary landscape that questions and problematizes everyday assumptions about the nature of teaching and learning. This is a key acknowledgment that needs to be brought to the fore, made explicit and constantly emphasized in the context of studies like this one that seek to illuminate, explore, and elaborate on particular areas of practice.

This study has arisen out of my own experience of designing and delivering post secondary level courses within anti-racist and multi-cultural educational frameworks. [1] Over time it became clear that multi-cultural and anti-racist discourses are areas that invite adult education practitioners to ask questions about the nature and scope of what they do and how they do it. Here I wish to assert that a re-consideration of "cognition" in the context of multi-culturalism raises important educational questions of a broad nature. These questions touch on a number of areas. What is the role of the emotions in cognition? What are the limits of didactic approaches to instruction? How well do they work in situations in which educators are seeking to work with the social dimension of learning?

The rising popularity of "lifelong learning" as a way of framing the way we think about and make sense of learning is a clear indication of the way in which adult and continuing education offerings are increasingly being thought of and promoted as important sources of personal and social education. It is against this background that continuing and adult education can be seen as an important terrain within which to develop the social practices required to foster the emergence of democratic and just societies.

Leicester (1989) defines multi-culturalism as a logical component of social and personal education. Hence she relates lifelong learning to the broader goal of moral development and the kinds of shifts in perspective that are required to operate effectively in societies that are modeled along egalitarian lines. She further argues that while personal and social education for children focuses on attitudinal formation, for adults, the emphasis is on shifting attitudes and changing behaviors. It is within this particularly liberal interpretation of the role of education that adult education practitioners face the challenge of moving beyond the simple presentation of propositional knowledge about the ideals of multi-culturalism, diversity and pluralism. It can be argued that they are required as practitioners to actually foster and promote the pre-disposition to act in ways that reflect a commitment to these perspectives.

Both John Dewey and Paulo Freire have sought to develop and set forth philosophies of education that explore the practical implications of pedagogies that address the development of social and personal knowledge. In doing this, they have both sought to rework popular educational definitions of cognition that have privileged propositional knowledge conveyed by didactic teaching methods. This does not mean that didactic instructive practices that primarily aim to convey propositional knowledge are ineffectual or useless, but rather that they may be more or less appropriate, in particular circumstances and under particular conditions.

I would like to suggest that a commitment to the social and personal aspects of education is a significant touch-point, one that requires the re-cognition, development and deployment of appropriate educational practices. As educators, we are forced to ask, how can we promote and facilitate forms of learning that are morally and ethically grounded and work with the social dimension of learning? In this study, I wish to suggest that Augusto Boal, the Brazilian theatre director and playwright, addresses and works with this primarily educational question in the context of the theatre. Using drama as the primary medium of instruction and working within the already established area of Theatre for Development, Theatre of the Oppressed, draws extensively on the creative and artistic modes of expression and communication.

I wish to assert that Theatre of the Oppressed is educational, rather than simply instructive, due to its emphasis on the development of social and personal values. In a sense, the aim of the Theatre of the Oppressed is the promotion and development of the moral imagination. It is widely recognized and accepted that experiential and interactive approaches to learning have sought to promote the holistic involvement of adult learners as social beings who exist in specific social context. It can be asserted that this study's interpretative location of Theatre of the Oppressed within the broad theoretical framework of experiential learning practices raises and problematizes a number of inter-related philosophically significant issues.

For example, we may wish to consider whether the currently available understandings of experiential learning allow adult educational practitioners to effectively accommodate and make sense of the particular way in which Theatre of the Oppressed works through the creative expressive mode of drama. We may further wish to ask about the educational significance of the reliance of Theatre of the Oppressed on the aesthetic domain of experience. It can be posited that the overall effect is to challenge our everyday assumptions about the nature and scope of experience.

While these are largely philosophical questions that explore primarily epistemological areas, there are also additional theoretical and practice related concerns.

We can ask in what ways can the structures, conventions and rituals of theatre promote and sustain alternative understandings of thinking, cognition and ultimately learning? While most adult education practitioners would like to think and believe that they are committed to holistic definitions and understandings of the nature and scope of experience, the overall failure to explicitly acknowledge the educational significance of the aesthetic domain of experience cannot be overlooked.

On the basis of the preceding assertions, it can be concluded that the contemporary emphasis on personal and social education and the related incorporation of multi-cultural perspectives requires the philosophical re-negotiation of assumptions about the nature and scope of learning. Against this background the social dimension of learning takes on exceptional educational value and significance, since it can be defined as an important component of the educational landscape shaping both the content and practice of education. By problematizing established understandings of experiential learning and seeking to conceptually locate Theatre of the Oppressed within a re-worked interpretation of the scope and nature of experience, one that stresses the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension, this study seeks to make a philosophical contribution to our understanding of the practice of adult education.

One may assert that by establishing such a broad "scope of study" we have moved outside and beyond the remit of the practice of

teaching. It can be argued that adult education practitioners simply need to be told what to teach and to be provided with a few helpful suggestions on the best way to do it. Such an approach is severely limiting and while this is what commonly occurs in adult education, it is not necessarily the best way forward or in the long term interest of practitioners or learners. Bright (1989) clearly indicates that those who are involved in the area of adult education need to develop a deeper philosophical understanding of the theories and practices that have come to define the contemporary area of professionalism. While there is extensive information on what adult educators should teach and how they could go about the "business" of teaching very little attention is given to the way we develop conceptual understandings of what we do as teachers.

Most adult education practitioners are already aware that we need to present students with more than just the facts about the implications of social actions. In this sense, effective education must be more than propositional knowledge about appropriate cultural and social relations. For example, the identification and condemnation of social practices that discriminate on the basis of race can be based on rational and objective facts about discrimination. Yet it is quite clear that in most cases this kind of information can simply promote memorization and limited levels of comprehension. The effective challenging of discriminatory practices often requires the exercise of moral agency, the active and responsive engagement

of a morally committed subjectivity. In remarking on the benefits of personal and social education Leicester (1989) draws on observations made by Reid (1965) who asserts that critical understanding requires multi-dimensional involvement and forms of cognition that are permeated by both values and emotions.

This point of view is supported by Greene (1995) who asserts that critical engagement demands the passionate reworking of ideas and points of view. Here of course, the affective domain is clearly implicated as a central component of apprehension. This brings us back to the previously explored observation that much of adult education continues to emphasize the idea of the holistic involvement of learners. In fact the dominant emphasis in adult education practice has been on the inter-active practices that stress "doing". While Jarvis (1995) has observed that this experiential focus has been over simplified and has resulted in an overwhelming emphasis on methodology, it is quite clear that a consideration of the scope and nature of experience has become a central concern of adult and continuing education practice and theory.

Hence it is important that as practitioners when we ask how can we teach students to act differently that we do this in ways that reflect a full consideration of the affective and emotional dimensions of experience. One of the responses to this "knotty" problem is the emergence of "politically correct" or scripted responses to particular social situations that require

demonstrations of sensitivity. In many ways the memorization and replication of a required and socially acceptable response to people of color, women and people with disabilities is a disingenuous reaction that demonstrates a failure to engage at the emotional and affective level that is needed for the emergence of sensitive and critically inspired responses.

In my own teaching, as an adult education practitioner and as a result of working with learners' experience in the context of multi-cultural approaches to education, I have come to challenge prevailing experiential learning practices that do not explicitly acknowledge the educational significance of the aesthetic domain. Of course, I am neither a drama or theatre specialist, in fact, I simply consider myself to be an adult education practitioner who simply wishes to work with a broad understanding of experiential learning that explicitly recognizes and works with the aesthetic domain. Coming into contact with the Theatre of the Oppressed system of improvisational drama sparked an immediate recognition of its educational implications. More specifically, using and working with the Theatre of the Oppressed has encouraged me to not only extend my understanding of the social dimension of learning but it has also enabled me to think about cognition differently. This re-cognition of thinking in the context of aesthetics brings the facilitative role of the creative expressive arts to the fore.

The question arises how can adult education practitioners with very little specialist knowledge of the theatre and more specifically drama, adopt, adapt and work with the aesthetic idiom of the Theatre of the Oppressed system? Of course, as an African Caribbean woman I do bring with me a specific history and body of socio-cultural practices that define and shape the scope of my understanding and interpretative reading of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices.

For me, much of the political and cultural ethos of contemporary Latin America is in some ways familiar terrain. The struggle for democracy in the context of "de facto" single party politics and the post-colonial legacy of economic and cultural dependency is an inherent feature of both contemporary Brazil and my own Caribbean Commonwealth territory of Trinidad and Tobago. Both jurisdictions draw on a common legacy of European imperialism and African slavery. This has given rise to specific shared cultural and social practices that are bounded and sustained by distinctive modes of celebration and resistance. Consequently, Carnival, the annual pre-lenten celebration is a cultural characteristic of both Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago. It can be argued that the festival is grounded in a shared new world aesthetic that relies on material expressions of subversion, reversal and a distinctive mode of grotesque realism. [2]

It cannot be over emphasized that as adult education practitioners, it is important to develop and sustain a critical and reflective practice, one that enables us to locate the ways we support what we do within a broader philosophical context. This study is one such attempt.

1.2 Study Outline

This study is divided into three sections. The first of these sections is primarily descriptive and provides a broad overview of the direction and focus of the study. The second section is devoted to an integrative synthesis of the relevant philosophical, theoretical and practical perspectives that define the multi-disciplinary scope of inquiry. [3] This interpretative focus is extended and elaborated on in the third and final section in pursuit of the study's overall aim: the illumination of meaning and a consequent conceptual enrichment. In addition to providing an introductory biographical sketch of Augusto Boal and indicating the nature of his formative role in the development of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices, the first section gives an overview of the scope, purpose, methods and intentions of the study. This introductory focus extends to include a literature review that uses the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices and experiential learning approaches and practices as respective points of departure.

In both instances the primary aim is to locate these areas of practice within broader theoretical and philosophical terrains. The reviews explore the various ways in which both Theatre of the Oppressed and Experiential Learning are understood, theorized, and related to established themes and debates in the area of continuing and adult education. These reviews adopt a critical and interrogative approach and seek to demonstrate the benefits of elaborating on conventional and established

understandings of experiential learning and its related practices.

The second section of the study moves on, from the primarily descriptive focus of the opening section, to a more critical and analytical exploration of experiential learning approaches and practices. The range and diversity of established practices are conveyed by drawing on Warner Weil and McGill's (1989) "village" typology. This descriptive framework is used to demonstrate the way in which the various clusters of experiential learning practice are related to specific educational aims. Against this background the generic features of experiential learning are identified. These generic features serve as the parameters along which the four conceptual dimensions of experiential learning are defined and elaborated on. This discursive shift facilitates the emergence of the more analytical aspects of the study.

The Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices are outlined against this background. Hence in addition to working towards the emergence of a conceptual understanding of experiential learning, the section establishes the broad parameters within which it is useful for adult education practitioners to develop an understanding of the educational implications of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. Within each of the sections there are a number of commentaries or personal narratives.

These are reflective accounts of adult and continuing education practice that aim to serve as supportive anecdotes or exemplars drawn from my own experience as a training consultant and adult education practitioner. In all of these narrative accounts, the practical implications of working with experience in order to promote learning are explored. More importantly, each of these accounts draws out and demonstrates at a practical level the importance of developing a conceptual recognition of the educational significance of the aesthetic domain. [4]

The third and final section of the study further refines the already established interpretative focus by delineating the pedagogical features of Theatre of the Oppressed. This includes its distinctively critical deployment of the aesthetic sensibilities and its particular way of working with and "joking" experience in order to promote the generation of knowledge and facilitation of learning. The final Chapter takes up and elaborates on the central thesis of this study. [5] In addition to demonstrating the educational value of Theatre of the Oppressed, the interpretative implications for our conceptualization of experience and experiential learning are explored. Hence the study closes with a delineation of the way in which we can extend our conceptual interpretations of experiential learning and its associated practices. More importantly, the educational benefits of this elaboration are philosophically sign-posted.

1.3 Study Methodology

As previously indicated, this study specifically sets out to address and make sense of the multi-dimensional nature of experience, in particular the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension. It would be straightforward and comparatively easy to assert that Theatre of the Oppressed simply works with experience in a dramatic way. This would require a simple demonstration of the capacity of Theatre of the Oppressed to work dramatically with experience in the context of education. Yet the conduct of a truly "reflective conversation" requires an engagement in a more deliberative mode of inquiry in a Deweyian sense.

Making sense of what we do and how we do it is a vital component of adult education practice and I wish to suggest that sense making is both reflective and interpretative. Schon (1987) succinctly refers to this sense making in the context of practice as the conduct of "reflective conversation", where practitioners shift almost imperceptibly between the constructs of theory and the practical action. There is strong correspondence between Schon's (1987) delineation of reflective conversation and Dewey's explanation of "deliberation".

In *Human Nature and Conduct* Dewey asserts:

"deliberation is a "dramatic rehearsal" in the imagination of various competing lines of conduct" [6]

Dewey elaborates by continuing:

"deliberation is an experiment in finding out what various combinations of selected events, of habits of impulses to see what the resultant action would be" [7]

Here it can be argued that Dewey embraces a broad definition of "knowing" that includes experiential, empirical and theoretical forms of knowledge. It can be asserted that he was promoting a particular mode of inquiry that is well suited to the area of professional development, particularly because it enables one to marry personal accounts of practical experience to established theoretical models and understandings of knowing.

As editors of a text about the practice of experiential learning Boud and Miller (1996) in *Working With Experience*, use this approach to structure the accounts of experiential learning provided by practitioners in the area. [8] Each contribution provides a descriptive personal narrative that relates the practitioner's experience in the area to the related theoretical constructs and understandings. This pattern of interweaving theory and narrative accounts within a broader context of making sense of experiential learning is echoed in an earlier review of experiential learning practices, *Using Experience For Learning* edited by Boud, Cohen and Walker. (1993) Each of the contributors draws on their own experiential knowledge of the area of practice by presenting anecdotal accounts in the form of personal narratives. [9]

These serve as supportive and qualitative expositions that demonstrate and make clear the specific ways in which practitioners working in the area of adult and continuing education think about and promote experiential learning. This approach is also adopted in *Reflection: Turning Experience Into Learning*. (Boud, Keogh and Walker 1985) Here another collection of accounts of experiential learning practice is illuminated and made clear by the inclusion of personal narratives. [10] The primary aim of citing this broad range of accounts that have adopted a distinctive approach to making sense of and defining their encounters and engagement with experiential learning is to demonstrate the widespread appeal and use of this particular approach. These narrative and expository accounts provide clear examples of the form of "reflective conversations" that Schon (1987) refers to.

It can be argued that this interactive synthesis of doing, thinking about action, and revising theory, constitutes a particular mode of deliberative inquiry that enables practitioners to refine their theoretical knowledge within the context of the concrete reality of doing. Practice provides a broad framework as it were within which to work out and clarify theory. This inter-active theory practice construct contrasts sharply with the more traditional approaches to research in the social sciences that often privilege theory by making it the dominant paradigm within which practice is shaped.

This does not mean that one is seeking to set practice above theory, rather one is seeking to recognize the role and contribution of what Schon (1987) refers to as, an "epistemology of practice". Of course, it can be argued that Schon's model of reflective practice can become a captive prisoner of a kind of circulatory epistemological framework that is unable to critically look beyond the confines of itself.

In drawing attention to the way in which architects demonstrate "knowing in action" and "reflection in action", Schon (1987) highlights their capacity to establish and operate within "virtual worlds". These are scaled down, contained miniature universes that operate as replicas within which the practitioner experiments and explores "what if" scenarios and assessments. It can be argued that adult and continuing education practitioners are required to establish "virtual worlds" that represent the needs, expectations and resources available to student populations for whom they are designing instruction. I would like to suggest that the more developed and sophisticated the quality of practitioner knowledge in action, the more stable and reliable are the virtual worlds that are established and worked with.

In a sense, the parameters of this study constitute a virtual world. As indicated in the study outline, a descriptive account of Theatre of the Oppressed will seek to map the broad and unmanageable terrain of experiential learning practice by identifying the specific generic features that set experiential

learning apart from other modes of instruction and learning.
[11] This will establish the basis for a conceptual framing of experiential learning, one that will facilitate the conduct of the kind of "reflexive conversation" Schon (1987) refers to.

This exploration of the conceptual terrain of experiential learning is a key component of this study as it provides the basis for making sense of the educational implications of Theatre of the Oppressed. As practitioners in the area of adult and continuing education we may often know about a broad range of instructional approaches and methods, yet unless we develop the conceptual frameworks within which they are grounded we will not be able to fully understand the educational implications of these practices. Consequently, while we may know of and use experiential learning approaches and practices, it is our conceptual grasp of the nature of experience and its instructive components that really defines the way we shape and develop practices in the area.

Soltis, (1978) in *An Introduction To The Analysis Of Educational Concepts* argues for the recognition of the importance of educators engaging in discourses that seek to identify, define and analyze the scope and nature of the educational concepts that underpin theory and practice. Although his understanding of analysis is grounded in a particularly techno-rational model of research and inquiry, Soltis (1978) makes an important point about the need for clarity and understanding in the area of education.

Much closer to the particular focus and interest of this study, Bailin (1996) sets forth a strong case for the distinctive contribution of research that is of a philosophical nature.

She explains that:

"Research in drama education tends to be of an empirical nature, either quantitative or qualitative. One centrally important type of research is often neglected, that is, research which is philosophical." [12]

She goes on to assert that:

"the kind of inquiry that philosophy embodies is I would argue important to the development of sound theories and practices and moreover provides the grounding for the meaningful research of the empirical kind". [13]

The value of Bailin's (1996) contribution lies in its clear recognition of the ways in which critical and analytical modes of philosophical inquiry can serve as a framework for mapping the conceptual underpinnings of theory. From within discourses of this nature we can surface and interrogate the underlying assumptions that shape and sustain common sense and everyday understandings about the scope of experience in the context of experiential learning.

In this sense "reflective conversations" that draw on and incorporate aspects of philosophical analysis, offer the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of key concepts and their associated theoretical landscapes while simultaneously drawing on experiential knowledge that has been forged and is

consequently grounded in the concrete reality of practice. For adult and continuing education practitioners, this is an important and in many ways complex undertaking that relies on a synthesis of perspectives and understandings. This does not mean that theory is dispensed with but rather that one seeks to move beyond theory, as it were, to identify and explore the considerations and underlying assumptions that shape the ways in which we theorize.

Most importantly, by re-framing the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices within the conceptual terrain of experiential learning we are in a metaphorical sense pinning the practices to a conceptual drawing board in ways that correspond with Schon's previously mentioned example of architectural model building. In this sense, this study relies on a primarily interpretative focus, one that depends on the kind of projective multi-disciplinary re-framing Gellnor (1985) refers to when he states that:

"...the first principle of the study of any belief system is that its ideas and terms must be stated in terms other than its own: that they must be projected on some screen other than the one they themselves provide...only in this way can we hope to lay bare the devices they employ to make their impact." [14]

I would like to suggest that this process of "illuminative projection" extends and elaborates on established understandings of Schon's "reflective conversation" and Dewey's model of

'deliberative' inquiry. Here the theoretical and philosophical implications of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practice are framed within the conceptual parameters of experiential learning. Hence the identification of the generic features of experiential learning and their delineation as key "Conceptual Dimensions" along and through which we can make sense of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices can be seen as one of the important achievements of this study.

In addition to extending prevailing understandings of experiential learning, this accomplishment also contributes to our understanding and practice of what Schon (1987) refers to as the "reflective turn". In this instance there is a deliberate incorporation of an interpretative focus, one that relies on the kind of "projective illumination" explained above. In summary, this study allows us to think about and make sense of the "experiential" nature of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices and the way in which they operate as a mode of inquiry that uses the processes of drama to work with the aesthetic dimension of experience.

As previously, explained in this study, we are asking, do we understand experience differently when we take into consideration "experiential" practices that explicitly incorporate the aesthetic dimension of experience and what is the educational significance of this incorporation? By adopting and developing a mode of inquiry that relies on the re-framing and a sustained

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demonstration of "illuminative projection", we can move backwards and forwards, over and beneath, and as it were, even beyond the traditional dichotomous separation of theory and practice and consequently contribute to the emergence of an epistemology of practice.

1.4 Theatre of the Oppressed - A Developmental Overview

Although Theatre of the Oppressed has evolved over the past forty years (Boal 1994; Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz 1994) it can effectively be defined as a work in progress. Hence it is problematic to refer to Theatre of the Oppressed practices in a way that suggests completion or closure. Like most radical, popular pedagogical practices Theatre of the Oppressed continues to be developed and elaborated on by both its founder, Augusto Boal and the many practitioners who have adopted and continue to adapt it. [15] From his early work in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's in Brazil and Latin America, to the more recent refinements in Europe, the United States, and the rest of the world, the critical events of Augusto Boal's personal life serve as important milestones that must be taken into consideration when recounting the developmental trajectory of Theatre of the Oppressed.

According to Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman, (1990) Augusto Boal was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1931. Boal initially attended the University of Rio. He was then sent to New York where he registered at the Columbia Univeristy to study chemistry in order to prepare for the medical career that his father had chosen for him. Apparently, Boal spent less and less time in the chemistry laboratories of Columbia as he became more and more involved with drama, initially as a playwright, then later as a director.

Upon returning to Brazil in the late 1950's Boal became the director of the Arena Theatre of Sao Paulo (Teatro de Arena de Sao Paulo). There he set about establishing a national theatre that sought to truly reflect contemporary Brazilian aspirations. In a sense it was a search for an indigenous aesthetic that expressed and demonstrated an engagement with the challenge of defining a post colonial creative sensibility. This aspiration is reflected in the work of a number of new world artists and writers. [16] It can be argued that this is an implicitly educational undertaking, as these "new world" artists are exploring the possibilities of developing creative sensibilities and related modes of artistic expression that effectively reflect the realities of their post colonial existences.

Boal's search for an aesthetic that reflected a distinctive "new world" identity took the Arena Theatre through a number of experimental and developmental stages. These progressive explorations profoundly influenced the company's final "critical" synthesis, an eclectic blend of divergent forms and conventions that ranged from symbolism to realism. It is against this background that Boal developed an interest in theorizing the implications of the various forms and styles of theatre. It is clear that as a result of working intensively and creatively with the process of drama, Boal came to recognize that the rituals and conventions that are used to re-present experience in the context of theatre, shape apprehension and understanding. [17]

According to Boal, (1979) initially Arena sought to break with the contemporary conventional styles of theatre and their dependence on the classical models of European theatre. Hence for a time "realism" became the alternative that challenged the dominant and colonial "Italianism" of the rival TBC (Teatro Brasileiro de Comedia). During this period the Arena experimented with Stanislavski's methods before moving on to create a more locally grounded theatre that reflected local themes explored by local playwrights. Boal refers to this as the Brazilian period and explains that:

"It was a very long period during which the Arena Theatre closed its doors to European playwrights, regardless of their high quality, opening them to anyone who wished to talk about Brazil to a Brazilian audience." [18]

He clearly indicates that the plays were political and topical:

"..The plays dealt with anything that was Brazilian: bribery in provincial soccer games, strikes against capitalists, adultery in a small village, subhuman living conditions of railway employees, bandits (cangaceiros) in the Northeast and popular beliefs in holy virgins devils, etc". [19]

Boal (1979) emphasizes that while the content was local and topical, Arena's pre-occupation with the promotion of social and political awareness was a key consideration. [20]

After this period, attention was given to reviving and reworking traditional and classical plays in order to present a distinctively Brazilian interpretation of what were seen to be universal themes. For example, Boal (1979) describes how the Arena extensively reworked Machiavelli's fifteenth century play "Madrugola" in order to critically address and comment on the immediate political landscape of contemporary Brazil. It can be argued that this was a kind "projective illumination" that sought to promote understanding by examining the contemporary political and social landscape of Brazil within the dramatized context of fifteenth century Italy.

Boal (1979) observes that these experiments were a prolonged gestation period marked by the integration and synthesis of various dramatic styles and genres. This entailed a conceptual reworking of the dominant perceptions of theatre and culminated in the emergence of a distinctively Brazilian and "new world" aesthetic that found expression in what Boal acknowledges were "a vast number of musicals". These essentially indigenous and lively productions, demonstrated the results of Arena's sustained period of nationalist commitment, critical reflection, and extensive self tutelage.

In Boal's (1979) judgment the most important production of this period was Arena Tells About Zumbi. He explains that both the content and the style of Zumbi signaled the explicitly political and implicitly educational orientations of the Arena theatre

company and its commitment to adopting a distinctively Brazilian self-consciousness that ran counter to the prevailing status quo. The very choice of subject matter had far reaching political implications. Zumbi, was an African paramount chief who along with his followers in 1697 committed mass suicide rather than submit to slavery. According to Geipel (1997), a historian who writes about the incident, for a long period, Zumbi and his followers created a "black Troy" in Palmares in the state of Alagoas.

These historical considerations emphasize that *Arena Tells of Zumbi* was a significant production. Not only did the content celebrate and rewrite the story of a largely ignored and overlooked slave insurrection, it brought to the fore aspects of Brazil's North Eastern history that were hitherto underplayed and denied attention at a national level. Casting Zumbi, an African character, as the hero of the story challenged traditional readings of Brazilian nationalism that had and continues to give very little attention to the historical influence and significance of the institution of slavery. (Geipel 1997) [21]

More profoundly, Boal (1979) explains that *Arena Tells About Zumbi* sought to work simultaneously on a number of levels: projecting past events onto the present, promoting the engagement of the audience, and directing an artistic and critical gaze on the contemporary politics of Brazil.

In addition to re-presenting a past account of "lived experience" from an alternative and radical perspective, the play explicitly drew attention to political issues that were well known to the audience. [22]

I would like to suggest that *Arena Tells About Zumbi* marked the emergence of the "joking motif" and the related playful, irreverent, carnivalesque aesthetic that continues to define the developmental trajectory of Theatre of the Oppressed. As Boal explains:

"Zumbi had many aims and succeeded in several. Its fundamental aim was the destruction of all theatrical conventions that had become obstacles to the esthetic development of the theatre. Still more was desired: to tell a story not from the cosmic perspective, but from an earthly perspective clearly localized in time and space - the perspective of the Arena theater and members of its company. The story was not narrated as if it existed autonomously; it existed solely in reference to the narrator". [23]

This study will argue that "joking" serves as a thematic centre piece that has shaped the entire spectrum of the Theatre of the Oppressed practices, grounding them in the terrain of popular theatre and establishing a link with the dialogical practices of popular education delineated by Paulo Freire. Hence "joking" can be viewed as the carnivalesque sub-text that

codifies the particular critical energies of Theatre of the Oppressed thereby shaping a distinctive model of educational theatre practices that aim to work with the social dimension of learning. [24]

So far, I have sought to provide a descriptive overview of the theatre based origins of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices and to draw particular attention to the activist and educational orientation that sets the practices aside from conventional forms and understandings of theatre. As part of their commitment to a radical and socially activist form of theatre, the Arena company took theatre to "the streets" and initially became involved in agit-prop, a popular form of political theatre.

As a result of a direct and sustained period of critical engagement with audiences who experienced extreme forms of poverty and deprivation on a daily basis, Boal devised Forum Theatre, a model of popular theatre that has become the most well known of the Theatre of the Oppressed practices. While Forum Theatre actually evolved over a protracted gestation period, it is important to relate its development to the emergence of "joking", the distinctive critical sensibility that was the sub-text of the Arena Tells About Zumbi". [27] Forum remains an innovative form of popular theatre that relies on the participation of an "activated" spect-actor.

In a way this transformation of established theatre conventions can be seen as a demonstration of the achievements of Arena's earlier experimental period. Forum was and continues to be significant insofar as it is a re-presentation of theatre that relies on the "joking" and carnivalesque subversion of the traditional role of the passive spectator. In a way Forum's focus on human agency and its insistence on the importance of actively involved spect-actors, brings to the fore the way in which theatre and the creative arts are essentially social products that are grounded in specific and particular ideological and consequently political orientations. [25]

The establishment of military rule in Brazil in 1964 resulted in the imposition of censorship on Boal's work with Arena. The occurrence of a second coup in 1968 and the use of even harsher restrictive measures culminated in his imprisonment and torture. Boal was later released and acquitted of all charges but as it was no longer safe to remain in Brazil he took up residence in Argentina and then Peru. Political pressures imposed by yet another military regime in Argentina led to the development of Invisible Theatre and forced Boal to withdraw from any open involvement with theatre. [26]

During this period he wrote Theatre of the Oppressed (1974), Latin American Techniques of Popular Theatre, (Boal 1975) and Two Hundred Exercises and Games for Actors and Non Actors. (Boal 1992)

The popularity of Theatre of the Oppressed was overwhelming and this seminal text has since been translated into twenty five languages. (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz 1994) In 1976, unable to remain and work in Latin America, Boal moved to Paris where he taught at the Sorbonne. He remained in France for over ten years. During this period he came to understand and work with the particular manifestations of social oppression that arise out of the more advanced forms of modernity that characterize the cultural landscape of contemporary Europe. Under these conditions, he developed and refined the critical focus of the "cop in the head" techniques that were later published in Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1995). The recognition of these "new oppressions" and the consequent decision to work with them was grounded in the premise that:

"the cops are in our heads but their headquarters, the barracks must be on the outside. The task was to discover how these "cops got into our heads and to invent ways of dislodging them" [27]

While Forum aimed to demonstrate forms of social action that could bring about change, the "cop in the head" techniques were designed to as it were, turn social action inside out and interrogate its interior aspects. Although the focus of this new area of practice can be read as a comparatively distinctive departure, it is essentially an elaboration of the instructional scope of Theatre of the Oppressed.

In 1986 Boal returned to Brazil, a more progressive regime had invited him to establish a theatre program for poor school children. Since then the funding has been withdrawn and Boal continues to work at his own centre in Rio de Janeiro, occasionally traveling abroad in order to conduct Theatre of the Oppressed workshops. [28] More recently, Boal has been elected to the Chamber of Vereadores on the successful ticket of the Worker's Party. His election campaign slogan was "Have The Courage To Be Happy" (Heritage 1994). Boal's most recent area of work is the development of Legislative Theatre and this has been both innovative and successful. (Boal 1997) This is yet another form of participative theatre that seeks to democratize the legislative process by opening it up to the spect-actor.

1.4.1 The Development Of Theatre Of the Oppressed As A Pedagogical Practice

From the onset Boal openly acknowledges his reliance on the legacy of Freire's work. In the essay entitled Poetics of the Oppressed, (Boal 1979) there is a clear indication that the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices was developed in the context of a literacy program that was as Boal explains "derived from Paulo Freire". Boal (1995) also identifies and describes how key encounters in the actual practice of Theatre of the Oppressed have served as catalyst or as he terms them "epiphanies" that brought about profound changes in the ways in which he chose to develop and elaborate on the scope and nature of Theatre of the Oppressed practices.

According to Boal, (1995) the first of these "epiphanies" occurred during the period of his involvement with agit-prop theatre in the impoverished North Eastern region of Brazil. He recalls his unforgettable encounter with a peasant named Virgilio. This incident is important as it shaped Boal's adoption of what can be seen as a responsible approach to the promotion of social and political activism. According to Boal, (1995) after presenting a highly politicized piece of improvisational theatre that advocated revolutionary and implicitly violent forms of political action, he was approached by Virgilio, who expressed, enthusiastic support for the suggestions made during dramatic improvisation.

Virgilio then called on the members of the theatre company to support the ideological rhetoric they had expressed during the improvisation, with action.

Boal (1995) explains that as a result of this incident, the point was forcefully made that as a theatre company they were ill-quipped and not genuinely prepared to engage in the radical forms of action they were advocating in the context of drama. Boal (1995) concluded that this type of political agitation was irresponsible, especially as these improvised plays were presented to audiences who experienced and lived the realities of the social and economic oppressions that were being denounced on stage. Boal (1995) goes on to explain that:

"..after this I have never again written plays that give advice or have I ever sent messages again. Except on occasions when I was running the same risk as everyone else". [29]

In support of this position Boal (1995) invokes the advice of Che Gueverra, the Chilean revolutionary

"solidarity means running the same risk" [30]

The second "Epiphany" that shaped the developmental trajectory of Theatre of the Oppressed is related to the emergence of Forum Theatre as a distinctive model of practice. Simultaneous Drama was the initial form of activist participatory drama used by the Arena in its agit-prop activities.

In this precursor to Forum Theatre, trained actors performed and audience participation was limited to suggesting solutions to the dilemmas and problems that had been dramatized. Boal (1995) provides an amusing account of the way in which the limitations of this model were highlighted by the "big Peruvian woman" who insisted on personally and forcefully demonstrating her own solution to the problem.

Boal (1995) observes that by taking the stage and literally acting out the resolution to the problem posed by the improvisation, "the big Peruvian woman" graphically drew attention to the way in which a truly popular and participative theatre ought to work with the problems that arose from the "lived experience" of the audience. Hence the model of Forum theatre grew out of the exigencies of practice and the strength of Forum lay in the innovative transformation of spectators to "spect-actors". [31]

The third "epiphany" delineated by Boal (1995) is related to his experience as a migrant in Europe where his confrontation with the less material and more socio-psychological manifestations of oppression forced him to recognize the influence of "le flic dans la tete" (the cop in the head). As previously explained, the result was that, he spent a two year period developing a particular variation of "image theatre" that sought to address the psycho-social dimension of the oppressed-oppressor dichotomy. [32]

It is important to note that each one of these "epiphanies" has signaled a further development of the Theatre of the Oppressed model. These elaborations have been consistently grounded and informed by the exigencies of practice. Looked at from the perspective of adult and continuing education, it can be argued that the overall development of the Theatre of the Oppressed system reflects an ongoing commitment to the forging of theories that arise out of a critical reflection on practice. This corresponds broadly with Freire's (1972) interpretative account of a liberating pedagogy that is grounded in "praxis".

Hence it can be argued that the implicit educational aspirations of Theatre of the Oppressed, in combination with its reliance on a critical engagement with "lived experience", aligns this primarily experiential model of popular theatre with specific experiential learning approaches and practices. For the most part, these have been adopted and developed by those whose work in the area of adult and continuing education and seek to promote forms of social activism and learning for social change. [33]

Boal (1995) himself draws attention to the pedagogical implications of his model of popular theatre when he explains that Theatre of the Oppressed is :

"theatre that is not didactic in the old sense of the word and style but pedagogic in the sense of collective learning". [34]

Both Boal and Freire work with a broad interpretation of the scope and nature of education and its related activities. This perspective can be related to an understanding that transformative learning involves the deployment of modes of inquiry that facilitate the empowerment of those who are marginalized and disadvantaged.

A review of the work of these two Brazilian theorists whose innovative approach to popular education surfaced during the same period, reveals that their interest in education is informed by a commitment to challenging the unjust social and economic arrangements that contribute to the inequitable distribution of goods and resources. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972) provides an interpretative analysis of "conscientization" and devotes considerable attention to highlighting the educational significance of an interrogative mode of dialogue that questions taken for granted assumptions and understandings of social reality and the supporting cultural practices.

From this perspective, *Theatre of the Oppressed* can be seen as an extension of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, an enactment and re-presentation of the very process of "conscientization" in a way that relies extensively on the creative modes of expression that work with the aesthetic dimensions of experience. The fundamental assumption underlying this distinctive understanding of education is that by recognizing and developing opportunities for collective emancipatory action, oppressed people can

effectively work to change the material conditions of their circumstances. I wish to argue that this is educational in the broad sense that is delineated by both Freire and Dewey.

Taylor, (1993) in his critical and evaluative account of the contribution of Freire's work indicates that Theatre of the Oppressed is inspired by anger against social injustice and is clearly related to Pedagogy of the Oppressed. He claims that:

"It was (then) Augusto Boal who opened up new insights for me into the working of Freire's mind and method. His Theatre of the Oppressed [Boal 1980] moves Freire out of the class room and into the theatre of life. It is a very new way of looking at the world; that is the root of the word theatros - a place for viewing, for observing. But the technique of theatre, the importance of declaiming and communicating, the playing of roles, the imagination to be other, the literacies of culture other than those that are bibliocentric, all contributed to my pedagogy".

It is this broader interpretation of pedagogy that this thesis seeks to address. Boal (1997) indicates that the objective of Poetics of the Oppressed is:

"to show how the theatre can be placed at the service of the Oppressed, so that they can express themselves, by using new language, they can discover new concepts". [35]

We can see a clearly educational agenda here. This pre-occupation with shifting people from the roles of being passive subjects to the position of being "active" subjects. This echoes Freire's pre-occupation with what he terms the "ontological" vocation of man, the rejection of the self as object and the related shift towards re-defining the self as a subject, capable of acting and imposing the consequences of action on the world. For Freire (1972) a pre-condition of acquiring and expressing freedom is the capacity to engage in self conscious inquiry. Drawing on Fanon's (1970) explanation of the way in which the oppressed interiorize oppression by incorporating the values and related paradigms of the oppressor, Freire (1974) expresses particular concern for the interrogation of dominant cultural practices.

[37]

Hence it is the experiences of those who are socially and economically oppressed that is the most valid focus of Freire's educational model of critical inquiry. As previously indicated, Theatre of the Oppressed is grounded in a similar premise. Like Freire's (1972) rejection of the banking concept of education in which the teacher is in total control, Boal (1979) rejects a corresponding conception of theatre that denies the agency of the spectator and his or her capacity to exercise choice. In order to redress this imbalance he introduces and develops a model of theatre that focuses on and promotes the activated "spect-actor".

He explains that:

"The poetics of the Oppressed is essentially the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters to either think or act in his place. The spect-actor frees himself, he thinks and acts for himself. Theatre is action. [38]

1.4.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - Biography As A Reflective Framework

At this point it is instructive to draw on the writing of Catherine Bateson whose work focuses on the recognition of the educational significance of biography. Bateson argues convincingly that biographical and auto-biographical accounts of events can be seen as a particular mode of personal narrative that is capable of illuminating and making clear the ways in which individual perspectives and interpretative frameworks are shaped and defined in the midst of "lived experience". Here the central argument is that learning is fostered through recall and the reflective exploration of memory. In summary, we learn through the critical re-presentation of experience.

Composing a Life, (Bateson 1989) is an auto-biographical account of the working and private lives of four women who Bateson interviews over an extended period of time. In the book, Bateson relies on the conceptual richness of improvisation as a metaphor that describes the adaptive responses of the women to the unpredictable situations and changing conditions they repeatedly face. Neither the career paths or the domestic lives of these four women conforms to the popular model of steady and cumulative development and progress.

Instead, they all experience unexpected setbacks, face challenging situations, and are consistently required to adapt and work through various situations and difficult circumstances. In every case the domestic and the public spheres of their lives criss-cross and conflict as they juggle their roles as women and mothers. In some instances there are no role models to serve as guides and to exemplify and shape how to smoothly integrate the fundamentally conflicting demands and expectations. Consequently they are forced to improvise.

Bateson (1989) suggests throughout the book that improvisation requires specific skills, a particular disposition of openness, and a willingness to engage in critical reflection. The strength of Bateson's account lies in its careful and thorough exploration of the ways in which both she and her subjects were able to "Compose a Life" amidst the demands of families and careers that required the forging of relationships with institutions that were often hostile to the presence of women.

Bateson (1989) relates the survival and ultimate success of her subjects to their capacity to maintain their particular visions of their roles as social agents. Whether they worked in the fields of medicine, higher education, or creative arts therapy, these women sustained a strong commitment to particular values and worked within a clearly delineated ethical framework.

Again and again the biographical details of these four women reveals more than a passing interest in areas like social justice, the provision of equitable access to economic resources, and the reduction of unfair forms of discrimination. Consequently, their improvised adaptations to changing conditions focused on a cluster of values that informed the choices they made. I would like to suggest that in many ways the developmental history of Theatre of the Oppressed and the trajectory of Augusto Boal's life are inseparable and reflect a similar commitment to adaptation and modification, in response to particular readings of certain context and situations. The noteworthy achievement is the retention of a body of core values that are grounded in an ethical framework that promotes social justice, equity and fairness.

Whether in Brazil or Argentina, Peru or Paris, Augusto Boal has continuously adapted, modified, improvised and consequently developed Theatre of the Oppressed as a body of systematic practices. Bateson's more recent work, *Peripheral Visions, Learning Along the Way*, (Bateson 1994) presents and explores her understanding of what she terms "peripheral learning". Here Bateson (1994) explores a particular approach to the acquisition of experiential knowledge that takes into consideration those instances when the disruption of taken for granted rituals jolts our awareness and consequently shifts our consciousness.

Although Bateson acknowledges that the term "longitudinal epiphany" is an oxymoron she emphasizes that the term conveys the conceptual richness of what she is seeking to communicate.

I would like to suggest that improvisation is a thematic motif that defines both the Theatre of the Oppressed practices and their developmental history. In many ways Boal's work can be read as an improvisation on a particular theme. A skilful demonstration of "jazz" that relies on the composer's capacity to re-invent forms, and consequently re-frame content without losing the original theme. This playful re-invention that Boal has defined as "joking" provides the "longitudinal epiphany" that Bateson defines as a variant of experiential learning.

[39] In Theatre of the Oppressed the "joker", the multi-dimensional impressario, is the embodiment of this capacity to improvise in ways that promote the profound and qualitatively rich reflection that can generate the "longitudinal epiphany" Bateson refers to.

1.5 Introductory Commentary - A Personal Narrative

During the period 1985 - 1992, I worked primarily in the area of adult and continuing education as a Training Consultant and an adult education tutor. A substantial portion of my consultancy work was in the areas of Race Relations and Equal Opportunities and involved the development and promotion of multi-cultural perspectives. In addition, for three consecutive years as a part-time adult education tutor, I taught Race, Community, and Society for the Extra-mural Department of the University of London. This diploma level course is referred to by Brah and Hoy (1989) in their commentary on experiential learning (Warner Weil and McGill 1989). As they have explained, as a community studies course, Race, Community, Society aimed to "develop an educational practice which maintains questions of social justice and equality". In a sense this resulted in the development of an emphasis on the social dimension of learning.

During this period, I was also involved with the design and delivery of a residential training program for ethnic minority staff run by the Civil Service College as part of its equal opportunity initiative. The aim was to provide middle management ethnic minority staff with personal and career development training. In the instance of the diploma course, Race, Community, Society, the students were primarily interested in expanding their own understanding and knowledge of the politics of contemporary racism in Britain.

This included a review of the varying approaches to the development and implementation of anti-racist and equal opportunities strategies and policies. The students for the most part were community and social workers and they indicated that they hoped that the course would provide them with the framework and theoretical background that would enable them to critically evaluate and subsequently improve their personal behavior and work practices.

It should be noted that many of the students taking this course also expressed a commitment to undertaking the social and political actions necessary for bringing about radical changes that would markedly improve the ways in which their organizations dealt with and sought to eliminate discriminatory behavior based on race. In summary, the majority of students who pursued the Race, Community and Society course expressed a desire to challenge racist practices and contemporary racism in Britain. Of course, the extent to which the diploma was able to adequately equip its graduates with the skills, competencies and knowledge required to meet the challenges that were identified before and during the course is debatable.

The seven day Civil Service residential course, Personal And Career Development for Ethnic Minority Managers differed from the Race, Community and Society course in a number of ways. Personal and Career Development For Ethnic Minority Managers is still offered at the Civil Service College and remains only

available to Civil Service Managers who are members of ethnic minority groups. My own involvement as the principal program designer and co-facilitator of the initial start-up workshop enabled me to develop an 'insiders' understanding of the factors that shaped the design, the delivery, and the participants' responses to the seven day residential program.

It is important to note that each of these courses was developed to meet the needs of a distinctive constituency. The courses therefore differed in content, focus and emphasis. In their critical appraisal of Race, Community and Society, Brah and Hoy (1989) explored their perceptions of the factors that contributed to the success of the course. For them participants ability to comprehend the historical specificity of contemporary racism in Britain was of primary importance. The course design purposely avoided using the experiential knowledge of students as its starting point.

Instead, according to Brah and Hoy, (1989) one of their primary aims was to ensure that students understood and explored the limitations of "common sense" interpretations of experience and the role played by ideology in the shaping and of social reality and our experiential interpretation of it. In the same article, Brah and Hoy (1989) emphasize that the comprehension of the social, cultural and economic conditions that define our existence are fundamental pre-requisites for fostering the kinds of social learning that can lead to social change.

It should be noted that the substantive focus of the comments by Brah and Hoy (1989) was a scathing critique of the recent popularization of 'experiential' approaches to teaching and learning. They were particularly critical of the nature and extent of the "reflective" practices that are often held out as an integral element of the experiential approach to teaching and learning. Brah and Hoy (1989) argued that the deployment and reliance on personal narratives as the source of concrete experience distracted students from the recognition of the importance of the political implications of the socially grounded aspects of personal experience. Brah and Hoy (1989) also expressed concern about the way in which contemporary interpretations of experiential learning with their emphasis on 'neutral' modes of facilitation shift pedagogy towards a primarily therapeutic terrain.

On the other hand it is clear that the Civil Service course differed in its approach, focus and overall intentions. From the onset, the course sought to encourage learners to generate personal narratives in ways that made experiential knowledge the starting point of learning. While the establishment of an appropriate social and implicitly political context within which to explore personal experience was an important consideration, this was not the primary goal. A number of interactive exercises, discussions and simulations were used to encourage learners to develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which the inter and intra personal communications and

transactions shape and in some instances define social reality. One of the main considerations influencing the design of the course was the recognition of the importance of learners being able to identify and define what Salmon (1989) refers to as one's "personal stance".

Salmon (1989) in her promotion of experiential learning approaches and practices suggests that the recognition of one's "personal stance" is an important determinant of one's capacity for social learning and ultimately the effective exercise of social agency. Knowledge of and about "personal stance" determines the extent to which the acquisition of new knowledge and insights can promote the kinds of social action that can bring about social change. Salmon (1990) draws attention to a specific instance of practice.

Hence she cites the example of female mathematics teachers who, despite their stated intention to challenge gender biases in the classroom by designing and delivering a mathematics curriculum that addressed the specific needs of their female students, they inadvertently re-enforced the very gender stereo types they sought to work against. Salmon (1989) explains that this was largely because they had failed to recognize the importance and implications of their own "personal stances" as female teachers who were operating in institutions that demonstrated a gender based distribution of roles and duties.

Hence the recognition, exploration and articulations of one's personal stance was an integral element of the Personal and Career Development program for Ethnic Minority Managers. Consequently, much of the reflective components of the program sought to promote a focus on the actual process of coming to know and learning about one's stance on issues like race and gender. Mulligan (1993) Heron (1993) and Brew (1993) are three experiential learning commentators who are equally concerned with the re-cognition of the very process of learning. Their contributions highlight the educational significance of learners being self-consciously aware of the affective aspects of their learning. It is against this background that this personal development course drew on the creative expressive arts in order to promote the exploration and delineation of learners' of "personal stance".

The residential and intensive nature of the course provided the opportunity to incorporate a broad range of creative expressive activities. Drama, art, movement and music were made integral elements of some of the interactive exercises. These were used to help learners delineate their 'personal stance' on crucial issues like multi-culturalism, equal opportunities and race. More importantly, the emphasis on the sharing and exploration of personal accounts of experience clearly gave the course a particular orientation that was in a sense "therapeutic".

Although post-course evaluations cannot be considered a reliable source of empirical validation, overall, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. A follow up evaluation workshop that followed three months later, revealed that learners had remained enthusiastic about the knowledge, understanding, and overall level of confidence they had attained. They directly related this development to the impact of the course and had gone on to establish an independent network that aimed to sustain their plans for long term professional and career development.

Of course, the two programs I have briefly commented on were in many ways different although they both explicitly sought to work with the social dimension of learning in the context of multi-culturalism, anti racist practices and equal opportunities. It is clearly unfair to compare their outcomes as in a sense their defining intentions were different. Yet as a practitioner, for me these experiences have fostered a reflective focus on the broad area of experiential learning practice. It is quite clear that in addition to the many approaches and practices that are currently drawn on by adult education practitioners, it is also important to develop an understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of experience. The impact of the activities that drew on the creative expressive arts in the Civil Service Course is an example of the way in which practice can shift us into the process of theorizing.

Theatre of the Oppressed came to my attention because it works directly with the aesthetic domain of experience and explicitly seeks to address with the social dimension of learning.

As an adult education practitioner I see "image theatre", as an important area of experiential learning practice, a way of working with experiential knowledge that in many ways extends and elaborates on the insights and understandings that have framed the design considerations underlying the Civil Service course. As the designer, I sought to develop a primarily experiential program that effectively worked with experience at a number of levels, particularly the aesthetic domain. In closing this personal account of practice I would like to suggest that this understanding and delineation of the multi-dimensional nature of experience is an important illuminative and interpretative framework that defines this study and can contribute to the development of more holistic approaches to the conduct and facilitation of experiential learning.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review Making Sense of Theatre of the Oppressed

2.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed As Delineated By Augusto Boal

This section of the study will provide an overview of Augusto Boal's own writing on and about the nature and scope of Theatre of the Oppressed. This is an important starting point for delineating the focus of this body of practices, drawing attention to their capacity to present and explore assumptions about social truths and highlighting the pedagogical use of drama. I would like to suggest that by referring to Boal's own theoretical understanding of the nature and scope of theatre, it is possible to map a discursive terrain within which to explore and makes sense of the aesthetic dimension of experience. In a sense, Boal's (1979; 1992; 1994) writings serve as discursive signposts, marking the interpretative landscape of this study.

Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1979), Games for Actors and Non Actors (Boal 1992) and Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1994) are the three main publications of Augusto Boal's work in English. While Boal has consistently written about Theatre of the Oppressed and the development of this work over the forty year gestation period, a substantial portion of this writing has been in Portuguese and French. These publications have remained largely inaccessible to English language readers.

For the most part critical commentary on the Theatre of the Oppressed system has been limited to descriptive appraisals of the efficacy of the methods. In *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism*, Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, (1994) offer the most

extensive critical treatment of the Theatre of the Oppressed system and its applications to date. For many theatre practitioners, community development educators and political activist the English edition of Theatre of the Oppressed in the early 1970's was their first encounter with the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. During this period the Freirian principles and practices upon which Theatre of the Oppressed openly drew were receiving considerable exposure (Taylor 1993).

Consequently upon its initial release Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1979) was automatically linked with its Brazilian antecedent Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Theatre of the Oppressed was widely acclaimed as a ground-breaking fusion of education for social change principles and radical theatre practices. As the cover of the Pluto Press edition of Theatre of the Oppressed proclaimed:

"Theatre is being removed from the grasp of the ruling class. Just as Freire shows how language could be a tool for liberation, so Boal restores theatre to its proper place as a popular form of communication and expression. He describes the ways in which theatre came to reflect ruling class control, and explains how that process can be reversed. The author relates his theory to actual examples in revolutionary theatre in Latin America and to the theatre exercises and games used in the barrios" [1]

From its earliest encounters with its North American and European supporters the Theatre of the Oppressed system was categorized as a "new" breed of activist theatre:

"Augusto Boal's achievement is so remarkable, so original and so ground breaking that I have no hesitation in describing the book....(Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal (1979) as the most important theoretical work on the theatre in modern times". [2]

2.1.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed

Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1979) is Augusto Boal's seminal work and by far the most theoretical to date. In this collection of five essays about the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices, Augusto Boal lays out his detailed exposition of the ways in which theatre forms define performance, re-present social action, convey social truths, and regulate the role and responses of the spectators. The first three essays, "Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy", "Machiavelli and the Poetics of Virtu" and "Hegel and Brecht: The Character as Subject or the Character as Object", all provide a clear indication of the ideological orientation and political pre-occupations of traditional theatre.

Boal's (1979) central claim is that theatre is essentially a social practice and therefore ultimately political. In support of this he observes that:

"all theater is necessarily political....."[3]

And concludes:

"the theater is a weapon.....a weapon for liberation" [4]

The two final essays of the text, "Poetics of the Oppressed" and "The Development of the Arena Theatre of Sao Paulo", are accounts of Boal's relentless search for what can be termed in the broadest sense a post and anti-colonial model of theatre that reflected the political climate of Brazil in the 1960's and 1970's. From the onset, in the essay "Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy" Boal (1979) is critical of what he sees as the purgative nature of Aristotle's delineation of catharsis.

For Boal, this model of tragedy effectively "purges" spectators by releasing their fear and emotion. Boal (1979) maintains that the inevitable fall from grace of the "tragic" hero enables the spectators to distance themselves from the action and remain passive observers. The tragic hero confronts the personal or social dilemma and acts, as it were, on behalf of a disengaged and neutral spectator. In this essay Boal (1979) seeks to demonstrate what he sees as the pervasive influence of theatre as a promoter of the dominant values and the related versions of social truths. He uses Aristotle's model of the tragic hero to suggest that theatre is essentially a social practice modeled along ideological lines that sustains the status quo and neutralizes the impulse for radical forms of social activism that seek to change the social order.

It is important to note that Boal (1979) bases his exposition on the underlying assumption that the arts are essentially instructive modes of expression and communication. The essay, *Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy* (Boal 1979) suggests that the arts are primarily concerned with the cultivation of "virtu". The essay goes on to explain the role of the arts and the distinctive ability of aesthetic modes of engagement to promote moral learning.

Boal (1979) explains that the theatre enables us to mirror and re-present the known world and to harness our creative energies to effect the re-organization of our thoughts and perceptions.

Through the imaginative lens of theatre, we can see and feel differently about things. This is not merely instructive but educational in the broadest sense as it questions and interrogates the way we feel about specific actions and the related values we may hold. [5] In the essay *Machiavelli and Poetics of Virtu*, Boal (1979) seeks to demonstrate how the overall social context shapes the way in which theatre re-presents "lived experience" and conveys various versions of social truth. By identifying the emergence of and the corresponding theatrical development of the "self made" protagonist in Machiavelli's work, Boal illustrates the social implications of the theatre.

Here Boal (1979) traces the historical trajectory of a more secular interpretations of "virtu". He posits that these more material understandings of success and accomplishment coincided with the rise of a fifteenth century bourgeois social and political consciousness that identified with and celebrated a multi-dimensional "self made" protagonist. This hero or heroine, unlike his or her predecessors, sought to define his or her material and social destiny in the face of insurmountable odds.

The main point being made here is that there is a marked coincidence between the ideological orientation of social and cultural formations and the modes of expression that are used by the expressive creative arts. This focus on the creative expressive arts and their capacity to present and negotiate social truths places Boal's (1979) theorizing of drama within the reflective gaze of educators.

In the essay "Hegel and Brecht: The Character as Subject or the Character as Object?" Boal (1979) continues in this vein. He openly explores the ability of theatre to enlighten by directly presenting and working with socially and politically contentious issues. There is a carrying forward of Brecht's (Willett 1957) work in the exploration of the way in which theatre can be deliberately used to contest and problematize established and widely accepted social truths. Boal (1979) supports the development of artistic and creative modes of critical engagement that emphasize the ability of people to make choices that can promote social change.

This desire for an activated subjectivity is understood by Schechner who in Games for Actors and Non Actors, (Boal 1992) underlines the scope of Boal's accomplishment:

"You have achieved what Brecht only dreamt of and wrote about; making a useful theatre that is entertaining, fun and instructive. It is a different kind of theatre a kind of social therapy...it focuses the mind relaxes the spirit and gives people a new handle on their situation." [6]

The essay Poetics of the Oppressed, explains how Boal (1979) fashioned his version of popular theatre while working in the area of literacy education. His account of working with the non literate residents of the urban barrios of Peru in the 1970's demonstrates the use of "image theatre" as a pedagogical technique. [7]

Hence people who were unable to read or write were able to communicate through "images" developed in the context of theatre. He explains how "image theatre" was used to facilitate the emergence and exploration of "generative themes" in a way that is similar to the Freirian practices on which the literacy program was based.

The final essay in *Theatre of the Oppressed*, (Boal 1979) is on the development of the Arena theatre of Sao Paulo, and, there Boal provides a descriptive outline of the particular way in which the Arena theatre company served as an incubating laboratory nurturing the experimental activities that gave rise to the "joker" and the joking motif that has characterized the entire system of practices. [8] The essay provides an account of the ways in which the desire to develop a post colonial expressive aesthetic culminated in the "carnavalesque" joking motif that relied on the playful subversion of the dominant models of theatrical expression and representation. More importantly, we are given a detailed practical account of Boal's desire to fashion a mode of theatre that is participatory, inclusive and ultimately educational.

2.1.2 Games For Actors And Non-Actors

In a comment cited on the cover of the book Games for Actors and Non-Actors, Theatre Research International describes this second major publication by Augusto Boal (1992) in English as:

"a useful handbook for those who want to explore Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed". [9]

This assessment reflects the main focus of this compendium of warm up exercises, games and interactive practices that Boal (1992) himself refers to as an "arsenal" of techniques. These exercises can be seen as the technology required for working with Theatre of the Oppressed practices. In the book we are offered over one hundred items drawn from a variety of sources that range from traditional children's games like Leap Frog to the rituals of popular cultural practices like the game Carnival in Rio.

For people who do not have a background in drama the games and activities are meant to introduce them to the practice of drama. At the same time the open and non-specialist approach extends and democratizes the vocation of theatre. Many of the exercises in Games for Actors and Non Actors have been designed to promote an awareness of the taken for granted bodily rhythms and patterns that support action in the everyday world. [10] Equilibrium of the Body, Muscular Chairs and massage exercises like Sea Waves and the Rolling Carpet are examples of this theatre related technology that works primarily with a material bodily understanding of experience in order to promote aesthetic apprehension and expression.

In summary, Games for Actors and Non-Actors is a useful handbook for adult education practitioners who may wish to use the techniques as instructional methods. Besides describing the warm up activities and Theatre of the Oppressed practices Games For Actors and Non-Actors (Boal 1992) is an informative source of case studies that are in effect examples of Boal's flexible approach to practice. Again and again, examples are given of the way in which the exigencies of practice have resulted in shifts in the way Theatre of the Oppressed is practised.

2.1.3 Rainbow Of Desire

The Rainbow of Desire is the most recent of Augusto Boal's publications in English, Jackson (1995) describes it as representing "the latest staging point in the journey". He goes on to describe the Rainbow of Desire as:

"the name Boal gives to a collection of theatrical techniques and exercises designed to harness the power of the "aesthetic space" (the stage) to examine individual, internalized oppressions and to place them within a larger context". [11]

In this book Boal (1995) turns once again to theorizing theatre. He extends the scope of his previous analytical trajectory by identifying and exploring three distinctive theatre related themes.

Before outlining what he refers to as the "cop in the head" techniques, Boal (1995) describes his understanding of the scope and nature of the "aesthetic space". He also identifies the "three hypotheses" that frame his delineation of theatre as a mode of critical and reflective discourse and goes on to provide a general account of the way in which the Jungian concept of "persona" can be used to explain the multi-dimensional presentation character in the context of theatre. The delineation of the "aesthetic space" is particularly important. [12]

Boal, (1995) in describing "the aesthetic space", explains how its properties work with the imagination, the memory and the

affective domain in ways that focus and sharpen apprehension. In essence Boal (1995) explains how the re-presentation of human action in the theatre depends on the use of the creative and imaginative faculties in ways that are different and stand apart from our everyday ways of engaging with social reality. In *Rainbow of Desire*, Boal also reworks and expands his definition of catharsis. (Boal 1995) Although he continues to challenge Aristotle's interpretation of catharsis and to condemn its propensity to passively discharge the creative energies of the spectator he now acknowledges the illuminative and beneficial implications of catharsis.

In introducing *Rainbow of Desire* (Boal 1995) Jackson explains that although Boal's political commitment and the ideological framework within which it is grounded has remained the same, the direction of this new work indicates that there has been a shift in emphasis. This must be recognized as a re-focusing on the psycho-social dynamics of transformational learning in the context of popular education. As previously explained it is the critical capacity of a radicalized "aesthetic space" that is explored and demonstrated in the exercises and activities set out in *Rainbow of Desire*. (Boal 1995)

In outlining the *Rainbow of Desire* techniques Boal (1995) makes a clear distinction between the Prospective, the Introspective and the Extraversion techniques.

For those who are familiar with the Theatre of the Oppressed none of these techniques are new, it is their application that is innovative. The "cop in the head" practices outlined in Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1995) are clearly more introspective than the previous applications of Theatre of the Oppressed. By embodying, presenting and dramatizing the subtle ways in which seduction and desire implicate the will and charge social agency, this body of Theatre of the Oppressed practices mines and works with the conscious and subconscious aspects of perception and experience. [13]

It can be asserted that the "cop in the head" practices are a body of techniques that explore experience by using the discursive medium of theatre to develop material representations of the psycho-dynamic processes in which knowing is grounded. Boal (1995) describes theatre in this context as a psychic mirror. This new work suggests that it is important to be able to define how and why we are often emotionally "tied" to the very conditions that oppress us even though they may restrict our ability to make choices that are personally and socially liberating. Here, Boal actually invites us to extend the scope of our understanding of the process of education to include the psycho-social dimensions of experience.

More importantly, by re-shaping and in effect "Joking" the conventional practices of theatre and using them to explore why people act in the ways that they do, the Rainbow of Desire

maps and critically explores the psycho-social terrain of the modern "desiring subject". Yet *Rainbow of Desire* (Boal 1995) does not step out of, or away from, the parameters of popular education as defined by Freire. (1972)

As previously explained, upon its initial release *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal 1979) was welcomed into the popular education tradition as a radical and militant approach to "conscientization". [14] This was in the late 1970's and early 1980's soon after *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972) had come to international prominence. It is fair to speculate that Boal's popularity can be related to his particular reworking and presentation of the pre-occupations of popular education at the time. His clear activist agenda coupled with an explicit commitment to democratizing theatre and working with its ability to promote social and cultural literacy corresponds with Freire's (1972) vision of education.

Boal (1995) is convinced that if there are "cops in the head" then these cops operate as restraints that are just as powerful as the coercive applications of force that are used to impose oppressive social arrangements. Under these conditions the purpose of *Theatre of the Oppressed* is primarily educational, as it works with the social dimension of learning by helping us to make the connection between the "cops in the head" and their headquarters outside. The overall aim is that through the exercises we can come to recognize the very process by which

ideological frames of reference and their related values are internalized.

In defending the new and more therapeutic orientation of Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal (1995) recounts the story of the political master swimmer, who in response to the cries of help from a lone swimmer who is drowning, declines to offer help on the basis that the swimmer is by himself and not in a larger group that would qualify for collective assistance. This can be seen as an implicit rejection of the uncritical promotion of the narrowly defined collectivist understandings of the nature and scope of radical approaches to popular education. It can be argued that in many ways the over emphasis on the "collective" components of experiential learning have distorted understandings of experiential learning among adult education practitioners who are associated with left wing, ideological orientations.

In Identity, Culture and the Post Modern World, Madan Sarup (1996) who has often been associated with critical Marxist readings of education as a social practice, problematizes essentialist and inherently fundamentalist readings of the nature and scope of social identity. It is interesting to note that Sarup (1996) like Augusto Boal, was a third world transplant, a migrant who was writing in a reflective and personal vein towards the end of his life.

Unlike his previous publications in the area of education, (Sarup 1982; 1991) the more accommodating tone of this final work suggests a critical and more flexible reading of the nature of social identity, one that embraces a psycho-social consideration of the role of the process of social learning. This stands in sharp contrast to the trenchant assertions of his previously held Marxist based theoretical position.

Hence Sarup (1996) observes that:

"The traditional Marxist perspective has always stressed that we are class agents; everything is subsumed under class. The orthodox model is rather simplistic because dynamics such as "race" and gender are marginalized. The current (post structuralist) model of self stresses that the human subject is decentred, contradictory and fragmented. The emphasis is in the subject in process. We are now beginning to understand some of the ways in which identity is criss-crossed by many social dynamics. [15]

This is the complex reading of social identity and social agency that "the cop in the head" practices outlined in *Rainbow of Desire* seeks to address. It can be argued that we do not simply act on the basis of intellectually grounded thought. Much of our actions are informed by habits that are in turn grounded in the broad definition of cognition that draws on the affective domain of experience. As previously explained, Boal's encounters with the post industrial psycho-social manifestations of oppression occurred during the 1980's in Europe. [16]

In *Rainbow of Desire*, he extends the system of Theatre of the Oppressed practices to include the capacity to explicitly work with the psycho-social dimension of experience. This enables us to align the Theatre of the Oppressed system with corresponding educational practices that seek to address the social dimension of learning in order to promote personal development. [17]

The recognition of the educational significance of the "aesthetic space" and its related ability to energize the affective dimension of experience invites practitioners to ask important philosophical questions like what is the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension of experience? While the theoretical aim of this study is to locate the Theatre of the Oppressed practices within the broad terrain of experiential learning, it is also important to contextualize Theatre of the Oppressed as a system of popular theatre that is primarily instructional in its focus. This is the focus of the following section. [18]

2.2 Theatre Of the Oppressed - Case Studies, Practitioners' Accounts, Commentaries

The overall aim of this section is to locate Theatre of the Oppressed within the multi-disciplinary landscapes of both popular and educational theatre. Although Theatre of the Oppressed has been around for over forty years there is no large body of dedicated literature. A bibliography compiled by Shutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1990) lists sixty articles and publications that focus specifically on Theatre of the Oppressed; eighteen of these were written by Augusto Boal himself in languages that include Portuguese and French.

As previously indicated, *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism* (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz 1994) is by far the most comprehensive collection of writing on and about Theatre of the Oppressed in English. The book consists of an interesting range of interpretations and responses to the Theatre of the Oppressed. The collection is meant to convey the process of transatlantic adoption and adaptation the Theatre of the Oppressed has undergone. As editors, Shutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) offer an overview of this assimilative process and situate the practices within a multi-disciplinary landscape.

These contributions on and about the Theatre of the Oppressed can serve as a critical point of departure for talking about and making sense of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices in the context of experiential learning.

Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) have divided *Playing Boal, Theatre Therapy, Activism* into three sections. The first section is made up of first person accounts of Theatre of the Oppressed practices. These can be seen as case studies or personal accounts of practice. The second section focuses on elaborating the multi-disciplinary nature of the Theatre of the Oppressed. The third section is mainly concerned with exploring some of the problems raised by practitioners who have sought to work with Theatre of the Oppressed practices in different areas. Each of these sections can be seen as delineating signposts that mark out the multi-disciplinary terrain of Theater of the Oppressed, and suggest critical points of departure for further elaboration.

For this study, the areas that address the the pedagogical and consequently educational significance of Theater of the Oppressed are the most important. I will use the three sections outlined above in order to draw attention to the scope of the existing literature on each area. The overall aim here is to use the framework of the Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) text as a starting point and to continuously move beyond it in order to draw attention to the multi-disciplinary implications of an interpretative reading of Theatre of the Oppressed.

2.2.1 Theatre of The Oppressed - Case Studies

An account of Augusto Boal being interviewed by Micheal Taussig and Richard Schechner (1994) introduces the collection of case studies of Theatre of the Oppressed. Both Schechner and Taussig are anthropologists and in the interview they talk with Boal about Theatre of the Oppressed and its impact as an educational mode of cultural and social activism. It should be noted that Schechner's (1993) work in the area of performance theory examines the performative significance of rituals and their ability to challenge or reinforce popular understandings and acceptances of social reality. His work defines performance in social terms and suggests theatre can promote social learning.

Taussig (1987) is a cultural anthropologist whose interest in post colonialism is reflected in his definitive study of the rituals of shamanism and their capacity to provoke and surface politically radical modes of post colonial counter memory. All three participants of this "talking book" interview agree that Theatre of the Oppressed is a work in process that is constantly being elaborated on as it gains international popularity. Taussig and Schechner (1994) recognize and support the social learning agenda of Theatre of the Oppressed but their comments reveal a certain level of guarded optimism about the extent to which Theatre of the Oppressed can generate the level of social learning required for wide spread effective social change.

This discussion introduces the case studies that follow. Diamond, (1994) the director of Headline Theatre in Vancouver, Canada describes an innovative adaptation of the Theatre of the Oppressed model of practice. The spect-actor interventions were conducted through television broadcasts and telephone "phone-ins". This willingness to adapt Theatre of the Oppressed is replicated in the accounts that follow. As a Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner working with older people Schweitzer (1994) was able to adapt Forum Theatre to meet their specific needs. Beyond this collection of case studies, practitioners' accounts and commentaries that make up *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism*, (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994) Hickson (1997) provides a corresponding account of customization and innovative adaptation. More importantly, there is evidence that Boal (1997) himself is constantly working on fresh applications of Theatre of the Oppressed. Legislative Theatre is the most recent of these. (Heritage 1994; Boal 1997)

Following the descriptive accounts of Theatre of the Oppressed provided by Diamond (1994) and Schweitzer, (1994) this section of *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism*, (Schutzman and Cohen Cruz, 1994) goes on to cite examples of practice that are located within the area of Theatre in Education. [19] Campbell (1994) explains that Breakout Theatre, an educational theatre company in the United Kingdom, was able to incorporate Theatre of the Oppressed practices in ways that reduced the production cost.

This took place during a period of economic crisis when funding for the arts in the United Kingdom was scarce.

Simon, (1997) Doyle, (1993) Vine, (1994) and McLaren (1993) have identified drama as a key site for the practice of critical forms of pedagogy that promote social learning. In a sense their work contributes to the broadening of the definition of education. Doyle's (1993) contribution in *Raising Curtains on Education* is the most substantial exploration of the educational implications of a drama focused pedagogy. Doyle (1993) provides a trenchant analysis of the educational implications of theatre by deploying the critical perspectives of Freire (1972) and Giroux. (1994) Doyle's (1993) work blends these critical interpretative frameworks with Greene's (1995) philosophical delineation of significance of the arts in education.

Although the area of compulsory schooling is usually recognized as the remit within which Theatre in Education operates, it is useful to explore the terrain briefly. The existence of a tradition of Theatre in Education practices suggests a history of the recognition of the instructional uses of the theatre. [20] It should be noted that, there has been a sustained debate about the Theatre in Education practices and their role. On one hand there are those who have chosen to identify the role of drama and its associated practices as primarily instructive, a pedagogical method in and of itself with its own rules and guidelines and practices.

Drama in Education practitioners support the position that is associated with the work of Heathcote (1973) and Bolton (1983) who rely extensively on "process drama", a variant of improvisational drama that involves the performance of the teacher "in role". The formative and far reaching influence of this perspective has had a considerable level of influence on much of primary and secondary school drama practice in the United Kingdom from the late 1960's through to late 1980's. [21]

Critics like Hornbrook (1998) have sought to challenge what they see as the romantic inclinations of this emphasis on improvisation and "process drama". Hornbrook (1998) also makes a clear case for a delineation of art as the exercise of the moral imagination. Hornbrook's (1998) observations correspond in some ways with Boal's (1979) exploration of the nature of theatre and by implication the dramatic arts as the creative and imaginative search for collective and shared understandings of social reality. This approach suggest that through the arts we can critically interrogate our knowledge of ourselves and the world.

Returning to the collection of case studies provided in *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism*, (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz 1994), Campbell's (1994) is a good example of a practitioner whose efforts signal the existence of an entire tradition of drama being used in the area of youth work in order to promote the social and personal development of young people. [22]

With the exception of Burgess and Gaudry (1985) the focus of these applications of theatre and drama in education remains largely descriptive and very little attempt is made to explain precisely how drama or theatre actually works with the social dimension of learning. This could be because most of these commentators are theatre practitioners rather than educators or education theorists.

It is against this background that contributions of Winston (1998) and Bailin (1996) are particularly important. Bailin, a philosopher working within the area of education, seeks to make sense of and define the educational significance of aesthetic modes of perception and apprehension. In concluding her analytical inquiry, Bailin (1996) identifies the importance of developing conceptual clarity, specifically in the area of Theatre in Education and more generally in the area of arts education. Moving beyond the parameters of Shutzman and Cohen's collection of case studies, we find that Winston (1998) provides by far the clearest attempt to date to actually explain how educators can use drama to promote learning.

While Winston's (1998) focus is on the promotion of moral learning, his explanation of the way in which the narrative elements of drama convey and explore the "thick" concepts that constitute his understanding of moral learning in a non-didactic way is an insightful departure.

Here Winston's (1998) work stresses the importance of non-didactic approaches to moral education and the need to recognize the processes that underlie the moral and social dimensions of learning. Consequently, Winston stands out as a good example of a thoughtful educator and drama practitioner who draws on a variety of perspectives and theories in order to weave together a well grounded philosophical perspective. Hence he draws attention to the need for educators to develop insights from a broad range of disciplines in order to establish an understanding of the educational significance of drama. Winston (1998) himself makes reference to work in the areas of psychology, social psychology and philosophy in order to develop his unique theoretical contribution.

2.2.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Multi-Disciplinary Implications

Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, (1994) use the descriptive heading Crossings, Conjunctions, Collisions to signal the way in which the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices can be related to a number of disciplines and areas of practice. Feldhendler, (1994) the first contributor in this section explores the therapeutic orientations of Theatre of the Oppressed. He relates Theatre of the Oppressed to the practices of psychodrama pioneered by Moreno, (1946) and psycho-analysis as defined by Lacan, and play therapy described and promoted by Winnicot (1980).

These are the therapeutic strands that many practitioners in the area of psychotherapy and drama therapy have been attracted to and as a result have sought to incorporate Boal's version of the activated theatre spect-actor in their work. Landy, a pioneering drama therapist who established one of the earliest University based post graduate drama therapy training courses for practitioners in America, openly acknowledges the ways in which Boal's work has shaped his own interpretation and practice of drama therapy. (Landy 1996; 1997) The emergence, rapid expansion and development of drama therapy as a dynamic multi-disciplinary area signals a desire to define the creative expressive arts as a therapeutic terrain.

Many drama therapists are currently engaged in defining, validating and accrediting the scope of professional practice. [23] There are also teachers and theatre practitioners, (Courtney 1988; Cohen and King 1997) who like Moreno, (1946) have chosen to work with the therapeutic aspects of drama. In some cases both theatre practitioners and drama therapists have for specific ideological reasons opted to model their practice of therapy primarily on Theatre of Oppressed. [24] This use of Theatre of the Oppressed for therapeutic interventions is supported by Schutzman (1994) who makes a strong case for the incorporation of a therapeutic dimension in political and social activism.

Schutzman (1994) suggests that by working therapeutically with the affective domain, Theatre of the Oppressed facilitates the kind of social learning required for effective and authentic forms of political and social activism. Schutzman's (1994) primary concern is meaningful negotiation of the complex psycho-social terrain of activism. She observes that despite the best intentions of some activists who are committed to working for social and political change, groups are often undermined by unnecessary levels of conflict and in-fighting.

She relates this to a failure to recognize the benefits of working therapeutically with the social and emotional dimension of their commitment to actions that will foster and promote change. Cohen-Cruz (1994) like Schutzman's (1994) also relates

Theatre Of the Oppressed to the activist tradition. She explains that we can locate Boal's work within the landscape of American activist theatre that has historically sought to challenge the social role of conventional theatre. Cohen-Cruz (1994) suggests that Theatre of the Oppressed with its democratically participative "spect-actor" has revitalized the area of activist theatre making. This observation is an important sign post for this study as it points the way to an entire body of literature on the area of activist theatre that extends beyond the boundaries of the United States and the United Kingdom to include a thriving tradition of developmental theatre that is located for the most part in the third world.

Boal (1995) himself has acknowledged that Theatre of the Oppressed has grown out of the Latin American tradition of "agit prop" theatre. This can in turn be linked to popular theatre in the third world. The Cambridge Guide To World Theatre (1988) has defined Third World Popular Theatre in the following terms:

"Theatre used by oppressed Third World people to achieve justice and development for themselves. There are now thousands of landless peasants, workers, and threatened minorities in Africa, the Americas, Asia, who use drama and theatre to confront the political, economic and social problems in their lives. These initiatives occurred quite separately in the late 1970's all over the Third world as economic and social conditions worsened for the very poor.

Some indigenous activists came to despair of any solutions to the growing misery by conventional development and political strategies. The despair focused on the top down nature of these solutions, seen to be located in super power rivalry, a one world economy, and the nuclear and conventional arms race. Theatre, provided those at the base of society with their own voice. Drama, as a process of collective improvisation using existing cultural forms of expression could offer the means of creating an analysis by very poor people of their material and cultural conditions. [25]

Etherton's (1988) description of Third World Theatre and the specific circumstances under which it emerged is quoted at length here. This is because I would like to highlight the particulars of the geo-political context from which developmental theatre emerged.

Etherton (1988) goes on refer to the work of the Sistren Theatre Collective of Jamaica (Ford-Smith 1986) and Ngugu Wa Thiong 'o, the Kenyan playwright and novelist, as examples of popular theatre practitioners who aim to promote social and cultural literacy through drama. Although it is primarily descriptive, Kerr's (1995) account of popular theatre in Africa provides a good review of developmental theatre in that region. Epskamp's (1989) gives a detailed account of the way in which developmental theatre promotes learning. Mda (1993) Mwansa (1991) and Musa (1998) also explore the way in which developmental theatre promotes learning

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and their work points to a growing body of literature on the area.

In addition to contributing to a better understanding of theatre for development Mda (1993) in *When People Play* uses communications theory to develop an analysis of developmental theatre and its capacity to promote social learning. He also makes us aware of the impact of the political agendas of bureaucratic, governmental and aid agencies. Mda (1993) explains that the interest of these established institutions can reframe the democratic ideals of developmental theatre and reduce its educational effectiveness. It should be noted that Mda's (1993) work also draws attention to the wide spread adoption and adaptation of Boal's Forum theatre in Africa.

More recently Salhi's (1998) editing of the text *African Theatre for Development Art of Self Determination*, reveals an on going commitment to defining, theorizing and making sense of developmental theatre or Third World Popular Theatre as distinctive genres defined by Etherton (1988). Many of the contributors to Salhi's text have focused on identifying administrative, policy related, and funding problems practitioners face in the third world. [26]

On the other hand some contributors are clearly working on theorizing the practice of Third World Popular Theatre. Hence Orlando's (1998) analysis of the work of *Were Were Liking*, a

Cameroon popular theatre performance artist, makes the important distinction between post modernist and post-colonial critical trajectories in developmental theatre. Orlando (1998) suggests that the post-colonial critical frameworks are inherently limiting as, at some level, they replicate the boundaries of the very structures they seek to reject. She maintains that the anti-colonial remit of these critical perspectives is frustrated by a dependence on the reductionist implications of the oppressor-oppressed paradigm.

Orlando (1998) uses *Were Were Liking's* reworking of traditional Cameroon rituals as an example of an innovative refinement of developmental theatre that relies on the dynamics of a post-modern rather than a post-colonial sensibility. For this study Orlando's (1998) commentary is an important contribution as it suggests that the ritualistic features of certain forms of enactment and embodiment can generate the cathartic illumination that is associated with the transformative energies of Freire's (1972) "conscientization".

More importantly the essay relates the material process of enactment to broader ideological concerns that are fundamentally about knowledge and the material aspects of its acquisition. Orlando's (1998) contribution asks us to re-consider the material body in the context of traditional performance rituals that are capable of working with experience in ways that are culturally and socially specific.

Hence Orlando (1998) argues that *Were Were Liking's* reliance on traditional performative structures, facilitates the emergence of a critical trajectory that not only resonates with her local audiences but also opens up for them alternative areas of critical discourse that escape as it were from an over simplistic rejection of colonial sensibilities and their related ideologies. To this end *Liking* rehabilitates Cameroon rituals that are traditionally associated with death and mourning. According to Orlando, (1998) *Were Were Liking* effectively captures the transitional and consequently potentially transformative energies of these traditional practices. The effect is the creation of an indigenous variant of developmental theatre that is inherently educational.

It can be argued that Orlando's (1998) interest in performance as mode of communication that works with the social dimension of learning relies on the acknowledgment of the educational value of the material components of embodiment and enactment. This is taken up and developed in an altogether different direction by Auslander (1994), the final contributor to this multi-disciplinary exploration of the scope and nature of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. Auslander (1994) demonstrates that Boal's (1979; 1992; 1995) achievements can be related more to the social theatre of Brecht than the transcendental tendencies of Grotowski's (1968) and Artaud's (1958) delineation of the "holy" practice of popular theatre.

Auslander (1994) explains that Theatre of the Oppressed essentially theorizes the body. Hence the theatre provides a creative framework for working with the material components of action. This approach acknowledges the epistemological significance of the material aspects of existence and challenges education's traditional privileging of a disembodied intellectual and affective self. This study suggests that this recognition of materiality is important for educators.

In *Rainbow of Desire*, Boal (1995) emphasizes the importance of working with the ritual components of action, he explains the importance of paying attention to what characters actually do in a physical sense:

"What do the characters do while they are talking?
Do they move about? What about while they are working
and how do they enjoy themselves ?" [27]

He concludes that:

"It" is often in the movements of the body that the rituals
of Oppression are most embedded". [28]

McLaren's (1993) study, *Schooling As Ritual Performance*, explores the ways in which the very rituals of schooling socialize children by collectively controlling the performative components of action and consequently narrowly delineating the scope of their subjectivity. Courtney, one of the most outstanding and well known drama in education practitioners and theorists has dedicated his most recent work (Courtney 1997) to developing an understanding of the role of rituals in drama.

He suggests that acting requires a certain kind of emotionally charged doing that is grounded in the aesthetic domain of experience. Courtney's (1997) observation is that this form of aesthetic engagement facilitates apprehension and is conducive to learning.

2.2.3 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Carnavalesque Implications

Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) in their introduction to *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism*, refer to the "activated spect-actor" as a carnivalized figure who embodies and enacts social agency through dramatic re-presentation. This is an extension of the preceding discussion on the educational implications of material dimensions of enactment and embodiment in the context of theatre. It is also one of the most important points of departure for this study as it uses a distinctive perspective in order to draw attention to the educational implications of Theatre of the Oppressed.

Mclaren's previously mentioned (1993) understanding of the impact of ritual in the process of schooling, relies on the work of cultural anthropologists like Schechner (1993) Taussig (1987) and the earlier contributions of Turner (1969). For this study Schechner's (1993) work is particularly important as it helps us to locate Theatre of the Oppressed within the broader literary tradition of theorizing the carnivalesque. The areas of critical and cultural studies have drawn extensively on the work of the Russian theorist, Bakhtin (1984), whose exploration of the implications of sixteenth century European carnival traditions has made an invaluable contribution to the area of performance theory. [29]

Bakhtin's (1984) *Rabelais And His World*, is a key contribution in the area as it reframes popular understandings of carnival by drawing attention to the cultural implications of the self in performance.

From this perspective the performing body, through the act of representation can endorse or disrupt the conventions and codes of cultural conduct through the carnivalesque representation of action. In reviewing the area of post-colonial drama, performance theorists, Gilbert and Tompkin, (1996) focus on Caribbean forms of popular creative expression. From this perspective they explore the critical role of the carnivalesque aesthetic. The work of Alleyne-Dettmers (1995) extends and demonstrates the social relevance of the carnivalesque in a post-colonial context by defining the political implications of Trinidad Carnival. [30]

From an African perspective Guingane (1997) draws our attention to the capacity of the carnivalesque to reverse, subvert and playfully disrupt. He describes the way in which traditional societies in Mali and Burkina Faso provide the creative space for expressing and representing unorthodox and effectively disruptive impulses and forms of behavior. In this instance Guingane (1997) explains that this embodiment and popular enactment of behaviors that are ordinarily not allowed serves as a critical and in a sense an educational reference point.

Attention is publicly and critically drawn to areas and instances of personal grievance and social dissatisfaction. [31] These examples demonstrate that the carnivalesque can signal a distinctive deployment of creative expressive arts, one that can serve an educational role through the critical re-presentation of social reality.

2.2.4 Theatre Of The Oppressed - A Critical Commentary

It should be noted that Theatre of the Oppressed is not without its critics. The final section of *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism* (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994) draws attention to the growing number of practitioners who are raising questions about the practices. Salverson (1994) challenges what she identifies as the limiting framework of the oppressed-oppressor dichotomy that Forum theatre uses to problematize and explore social issues. Her own experience is that social and political manifestations of oppression are far more complicated and multi-faceted than this bifocal delineation. Hornbrook (1998) and Winston (1998) support this observation. Spry (1994) also questions Boal's authority and political agenda as a white Latin American heterosexual male.

Fisher (1994) also explores the limitations of the oppressed-oppressor paradigm and cites the inability of Theatre of the Oppressed to cope with the contradictory complexities of class, gender, and race. She suggests that these social variables disorganize and fragment straightforward readings and understandings of the way in which power manifests itself and operates in contemporary Western societies. O' Sullivan's (1997) personal account of a workshop with Augusto Boal echoes some of the concerns expressed by Fisher (1994), Spry (1994) and Salverson (1994) and she makes an important plea for careful and reflective interrogation of Theatre of the Oppressed by practitioners. [32]

Kohtes (1993) challenges the originality of Boal's (1994) Invisible Theatre by identifying its use and emergence in other contexts. Kohtes (1993) also questions Boal's (1979) rigorous rejection of Aristolian "catharsis". Winston (1998) also raises concerns about what he defines as Boal's failure to recognize the illuminative and consequently educational implications of Aristotle's delineation of "catharsis". Hence Winston (1998) argues that the cathartic discharge of emotions promoted by the process of drama is not necessarily draining but can rather be insightful. [33]

Overall, most criticisms of Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices focus on what is regarded as its implicit romantic idealism. [34] As the work receives more exposure and consequently more critical scrutiny further questions will arise. These must be seen as part of a broader adaptive process that is actually encouraged by Boal. (1997) In closing this section of the literature review it must be repeated that the work of Doyle (1993), McLaren (1993), Courtney (1997), Franks (1996), Fisher (1994), and, most significantly, Winston (1998) are of particular importance for this study. These are all educators who have sought to make sense of theatre in the context of educational practice. As a result they have drawn our attention to the educational value of the aesthetic dimension of experience. In addition they have encouraged the emergence of the multi-disciplinary focus required for an interpretive study of this nature.

2.3 From Pedagogy Of The Oppressed To Theatre Of The Oppressed - Making the Connection

Boal (1979;1997) has drawn attention to the historical and developmental reliance of Theatre of the Oppressed on the work of his fellow Brazilian, Paulo Freire. [35] As previously indicated one can of course recognize a number of striking parallels that demonstrate the existence of a connective link between their work. The works of Boal (1979) and Freire (1972) emerged during the mid to late 1970's a period of profound political turbulence in Latin America. They were both imprisoned and forced to go into exile during the 1970's. In addition to acquiring international recognition and acclaim outside of Brazil, they both returned during the 1980's and carried on the work they had started over a decade before.

In order to understand the developmental legacy of Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire 1972) and its impact on Theatre of the Oppressed, it is important to locate Freire's contribution to our understanding of education within a broader philosophical terrain. While Pedagogy of the Oppressed is widely recognized as Freire's (1972) seminal work, it is only one of many publications that elaborates on and makes clear scope of Freire's philosophical trajectory. [36] Of course, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire 1972) is the single and most outstanding distillation of Paulo Freire's principles and the related instructional methodology that he developed to promote the acquisition of literacy.

Of all Paulo Freire's writings, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1972) is the text that most effectively demonstrates the broad array of ideas and perspectives that he draws on. Freire is an eclectic thinker, whose writing is influenced by a range of disparate sources. Paul Taylor (1993), a commentator, who has catalogued and sought to critically explore Freire's accomplishments, explains the scope of the Freirian perspective:

"the unraveling of [these] trace elements within the filigree of his ideas and his practice is made all the more difficult because Freire's library is actually more syncretic than it is eclectic. His analysis of history and culture leans heavily on Althusser, Fanon, Lukacs, Mao, Marcuse and Marx, as much as Aristotle, Descartes, Hegel and Rousseau". [37]

Taylor (1993) goes on to site the equally broad range of theological influences that relate Freire's perspective to the general ethos of Christian democracy. Freire (1997) himself posits that in writing he carefully aims to achieve this synthesis of sources, and regards the very process of writing as a filtering and purifying mechanism.

I would like to suggest that Freire's over arching concern with the principles of democracy and the role of education in promoting the kind of cultural literacy that facilitates the workings of democracy, makes him a kind of Latin American John Dewey. Giroux, (1988) whose work clearly reflects the influence of Freire's critical perspective, acknowledges the importance of Freire's achievements and relates them to the work of Dewey,

Illich (1976) and the entire tradition of progressive education theorists and philosophers who have consistently sought to develop broader and more holistic readings of the scope and nature of education.

These radical and somewhat alternative readings of education aim to define education in social and political terms and relate its practice to the establishment and maintenance of prevailing oppressive social and cultural practices. Like Dewey, Freire (1972) displays an overriding concern with the importance of "lived experience" and the need for the educators to provide opportunities for learners to work with experience in interrogative and reflective ways in order to generate knowledge that is immediate and relevant to the management of their day-to-day lives. Of course, it is clear that as educational philosophers they have operated within somewhat different ideological and political frameworks. Although the political and social ethos of the United States of America in the first half of the twentieth century is a far cry entirely from that of Latin America in the second half of the century, there is no mistaking the democratic aspirations of both Dewey and Freire. They are philosophers who have both looked to education as they sought to answer the developmental challenges of modernity.

It is not being suggested here that Freire's work relies directly on discourses developed by Dewey but rather that there are significant areas of correspondence.

I would like to posit that Freire's work, unlike Dewey's, is energized by a sense of urgent immediacy, a quest for radical change in present time. The central argument made in Freire's work is that through dialogue we can promote "conscientization", a form of transformative learning among those who are marginalized and oppressed. This recognition of the validity of the experiential knowledge of those who are oppressed and the recognition of the transformative role of "conscientization" draws attention to the educational significance of developing a conceptual understanding of the nature and scope of experience.

Freire's (1972) work demonstrates a conceptualization of experience that draws extensively on an anthropological frame of reference. This enables him to define pedagogy as a primarily reflective and investigative undertaking that relies on the critical interrogation of experience. Dewey (1939) is equally concerned with developing practices of reflective inquiry. Hence in addition to developing a "scientific" approach to the process of inquiry, he seeks to map and explore the very structures of experience. [38] From this perspective some of the main aims of Dewey's project is the philosophical re-framing of experience in the context of education.

In defining experience Dewey (1934) aims to incorporate an acknowledgment of the aesthetic dimension of experience, its reliance on the sensibilities, and the integrative role of the imaginative energies that shape our abilities to think and

reason. Here Dewey makes the imagination a central component of thinking and reasoning and challenges the binary and dichotomous understanding of thinking held by many philosophers who adhere to more positivist understandings of the nature of knowledge.

This contribution signals an effective re-thinking of traditional conceptualizations of the nature and scope of experience. We are effectively encouraged to recognise the educational significance of the affective and material components of experience. Hence the way we feel and the things we do shape the processes of thinking and learning. These considerations draw attention to the educational implications of Theatre of the Oppressed and its radical elaboration of Freire's delineation of "conscientization".

Holder (1995) is one of the recent philosophers working in the area of education who has sought to draw attention to the importance of Dewey's work and its capacity to help us reframe understandings of educational practice and theory. Holder (1995) establishes a connection between Dewey's theory of "naturalistic experience" and a radical interpretation of apprehension that challenges the more established readings of the process of cognition.

Holder's (1995) contribution is particularly important here as it relates Dewey's alternative and fruitful reading of the

nature of experience and Mark Johnson's (1987) exploration of the ways in which meaning, understanding and rationality arise from, and are conditioned by, the material patterns of our bodily experience.

For this study this is an important signpost as Johnson's (1987) work is a significant philosophical bridge, as it were, one that links cognition to the material processes associated with embodiment and performance. This perspective encourages the questioning of taken for granted assumptions about the abstract nature of knowing and knowledge. Johnson's work provides a projective context, as it were, for asking educational questions about the communicative role of the arts and the limits of everyday forms of language.

2.4 Creative Forms Of Expression And The Articulation Of Difference

It is clear that Boal's work forces adult education practitioners to think about and consider the relationship between aesthetic apprehension and the experience of coming to know. This raises a number of important educational questions. To what extent are our understandings forged by the engagement of our creative and imaginal powers? How is learning for and about the possibilities of personal and social change influenced and shaped by the exercise of our creativity? These are the issues we must grapple with if we are to develop a conceptual framework within which we can theorize the educational implications of Boal's methodology and its contribution to our understanding of experiential learning.

In drawing attention to the importance of creativity to the process of learning Martin (1996) cites Wittgenstein's later work to support his argument that it is necessary to step away from normative and everyday modes of expression and communication in order to critique and challenge "the way things are". This is not a stepping out of, or an abdication of language that Martin is advocating, nor is it a stepping away from the use of everyday language in order to impose mastery or to manipulate it. Rather, he is supporting the promotion of the creative engagement or 'play' with subject matter or materials that allows us to think from deeply within about that subject matter.

Martin's (1996) conclusion is that this type of engagement can result in the establishment of new and sometimes startling connections that are based on fresh insights and responses. He further argues that this imaginative and creative engagement is a critical factor within the dynamic of comprehending, making sense of, and theorizing about the nature of our environment and our location within it. Martin (1996) cites Wittgenstein's later work in order to support his own call for 'creative' and 'playful' approaches to the teaching of philosophy. He goes on to argue that by transgressing the boundaries of language that traditionally separate the playful from the serious we can make new meanings. This is the primary focus of Boal's work. It achieves its purpose by replacing traditional methods of instruction with a subversive and oppositional model of theatre that is, I wish, to suggest carnivalesque in its orientation.

In so far as Theatre of the Oppressed techniques focus on defining, challenging and seeking release from identified sources of oppression, it can be argued that Boal's work is 'emancipatory'. By using the non-verbal and fundamentally oppositional medium of 'image theatre' the techniques seek to give "voice" to those who are marginalized by inviting them to challenge the dominant discourses that have consigned them to positions of relative powerlessness. As Giroux (1993a) indicates, this speaking from the margins is important and requires the development of specific critical strategies and approaches.

Hence Theatre of the Oppressed with its alternative and material reading of discursive practice should be of special interest to educators.

In writing about the contradictory impulses that characterize much of the contemporary discourses about differences and oppressions, Preston (1995) argues that in our attempts to make sense of and theorize how differences are constructed on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, class and physical ability we have developed exclusionary languages of theory that effectively mis-represent the marginalized lives of those we seek to re-define and include. Ironically, the very language of discourses about the post modern moment, de-construction and the significance of language, distances us from the sensibilities of those on whose behalf we purport to speak.

It must be asserted that the language of theory is an integral element of communication within educational institutions and its pervasive and sometimes exclusive use limits our ability to indulge in creative and imaginative 'play'. Under these circumstances the educational process itself is stymied. In support of the need to step away from and distance ourselves from normative assumptions about the way things are, Preston (1995) draws critical attention to the inherent limitations of the language of theory. A considerable level of formal and informal adult educational activity and discourse is conducted within the boundaries of the language of theory.

In fact, the conduct of well reasoned, rational and discursive dialogue is a crucial defining element of contemporary adult education that sets it apart in many instances from mere talk.

Preston's (1995) argument, that I go along with, is that the continued and almost exclusive use of the language of theory, and our reliance on it to explore notions of differences and the politics of difference is based on the flawed assumption that available 'theoretical language' can and does convey the complexity of lived experience in its multiple manifestations of gender, race, ethnicity and class. Preston (1995) rightly argues that much of the nuances of the lived experience within these modalities remains elusive when we constrict ourselves to the limitations imposed by the inherent constraints of theoretical language.

Thus the assumed universality and neutrality of critical and theoretical language cannot adequately contain and convey the complexity of the lived experience of those who have been designated as different on account of their gender, race, ethnicity or physical abilities and are subsequently consigned to occupy marginal, social, economic and political positions.

Preston (1995) cites Toni Morrison's creative writing as a fine example of the way in which creative and literary forms of expression uniquely deploy the imaginal and aesthetic elements of apprehension in order to render authentic accounts of lived

experience that are beyond the boundaries of theoretical language.

[39]

It is on this point that Preston's (1995) perspective coincides with Boal's fundamental formulation that particular forms of creative and aesthetic expression can encourage oppressed 'voices from the margins' to explore and reflect on their immediate and lived experience as a prelude to, alternatively, theorizing difference in ways that promote personal and social action and transformation. (Boal 1979)

A deeper, and even more complex understanding of the operational dynamic of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques and the medium of image theatre on which it is based can be obtained by referring to the concept of "Bodylore" put forward by Young (1994) and elaborated on by Sklar (1994). In defining Bodylore, Young, a folklorist, works within the framework of anthropology and relies extensively on the performing arts. The result is an aesthetic theory of knowing that relies on kinesthetic modes of expression and communication. Sklar (1994) in reflecting on her own experience as a folklorist, argues that Bodylore is a bodily and kinesthetic mode of awareness and communication that promotes knowing through the senses. She suggests that activities that involve movement, such as dance, improvisational acting out and ritual performance promote a certain form of kinesthetic involvement, an alternative and in some ways subversive form of experiencing and consequently knowing.

The ideas put forward by Young (1994) and Sklar (1994) in combination with Preston's (1995) comments on the limitations of formal language, make a powerful case for considering the educational significance of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. It can be argued that 'image theatre' with its emphasis on material and bodily forms of expression and communication seeks to move beyond the constraints of the language of theory and to employ a kinesthetic medium in order to present a disruptive and oppositional construction of "the way things are" and to suggest the way things could be.

As previously indicated, Mark Johnson's (1987) study of cognition that specifically emphasizes the importance of patterns of bodily experience clearly challenges positivists philosophical frameworks that have traditionally separated the body from the mind and sought to maintain the mutual exclusivity of these spheres of being. Johnson's (1987) theoretical and philosophical contribution extends our understanding of how the imagination works by linking cognitive and bodily structures in ways that demonstrate how basic concepts like balance and force are grounded in our material experience of them. According to Johnson "image schematas" are the key conceptual framework that define our material engagement with the world and our capacity to make sense of this engagement. [40] This concept of "image schemata", corresponds closely with, and is almost identical to Dewey's interpretation of the structures of experience that shape cognition.

While Mark Johnson (1993) does not openly acknowledge a reliance on Dewey's theory of naturalistic experience the correspondence is none-the-less remarkable.

Boal's development and elaboration of "image theatre", as a discursive subsystem of Theatre of the Oppressed that works beyond the boundaries of everyday language, takes on educational value when read against the frame of Johnson's work. By working with the material body, as a source and repository of experience as it were, Theatre of the Oppressed invites us to broaden our understanding and reading of the nature and scope of experience. Theatre of the Oppressed invites those who are oppressed and marginalized to creatively re-experience their material bodies in ways that run counter to conventional understandings of social agency and action. As indicated in the general overview Theatre of the Oppressed provided the discursive subsystem of "image theatre" that prepares us for the subversive imagery of a carnivalesque aesthetic.

Against this background, Theatre of the Oppressed must be seen as more than simply a model of popular education practice that works with the social dimension of learning by deploying the processes of drama in the context of theatre. The model's historical and developmental affinity with Pedagogy of the Oppressed and its clear commitment to innovatively working with the aesthetic domain of experience invites us to recognize it as a re-framing of educational practice that draws directly

on the imagination and the creative sensibilities. The preceding sections of this literature review clearly indicate that there is a substantial level of interest in this area as educators continue to pose and explore questions about the scope and nature of experience.

Adult and continuing education practitioners have also consistently raised questions about the nature of experience and the possibility of fashioning and developing instructional approaches that work effectively with experience. These concerns and interests have provided the inspiration for the remarkable contemporary growth in experiential learning approaches and practices. In posing this study's central question about the experiential and consequently "educational" value of Theatre of the Oppressed, it is important to initially turn our attention to the various accounts and descriptions of experiential learning practice.

2.5 Working With Experience Creatively - An Account Of An Away Day Retreat Workshop

This is the second descriptive account of practice in this study. The aim here is to outline a practice based example of the creative "funding" of the reflection on experience that Dewey (1933) recommends. This example of practice is taken from my work with a continuing education department of a small, island based community college. The department's main source of income is the delivery of a broad range of modular credit based courses in response to the growing demand for degree level and post graduate professional development.

As the main provider of post secondary level educational opportunities for vocational and professional development within a territorial jurisdiction of sixty five thousand people, the adult and continuing education department performs an important administrative role. Course inquiries, registration and administrative procedures associated with transfers and transcripts are all routed through the department. This is further complicated by the department's profile as the largest profit centre of the college.

Consequently, the staff felt overwhelmed by the multiplicity of demands they faced and the need to maintain a public image that corresponded with the institution's overall marketing profile. The registration period, a short two week duration, of intensive administrative activity had become a focal point.

It was the period during which the department experienced its most traumatic forms of crisis management. These "crisis points" coincided with the quarterly arrival of each semester.

I was initially approached as an independent external consultant, the brief was to run the "away day" retreat, an annual staff event that was conducted off site. It was explained that the "away day" retreat was usually held in a relatively comfortable setting and staff were encouraged to develop the kind of reflective focus required for personal and organizational development.

All staff were required to attend the session. Much of the preceding information about the "traumatic" nature of the registration periods and the associated crisis management response emerged during the conduct of the actual retreat. The pre-course brief was very general and only indicated that "registration" had become a difficult area of staff relations. Given the general nature of the brief and the overall expectations about the informal ethos of the "away day" retreat, I sought to design a workshop format that conveyed a playful and relaxed tone. Some of the exercises explicitly used the creative arts as a medium of expression and communication. For example, instead of talking about the department and its relational and administrative problems participants were asked to form sub groups and to draw a picture of an animal that represented the group's collective perception of the department.

In addition, instead of verbally explaining and describing the levels of tension triggered by the traumatic registration process participants were asked to first map then sculpt the process with their bodies. Although I was not directly using "image theatre" in its purest form, my conceptual knowledge and understanding of the body of Theatre of the Oppressed practices infused the design, the experiential learning activities and the facilitative mode that was adopted. A number of exercises in the workshop were equally reliant on working with the aesthetic domain of experience and the design approach allowed us to frequently return to more conventional approaches to working with experience in order to discuss, record and summarize the outcomes of each activity.

Although the workshop was only a day long the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, more so than many conventional workshops that I have run. Particular attention was given to evaluating effectiveness of using the creative expressive arts. The feedback on this area was very positive. It can be argued that by explicitly working with aesthetic domain and developing participants' capacity to communicate effectively within this context, many people felt that they had been able to avoid the counter-productive activity of "talking about the same old things in the same old ways". The drawing, creative expressive movement and singing, had as it, were created an alternative vernacular, a vocabulary that in some instances was believed to have shifted everyday and common sense perceptions of the problem.

Overall, there appeared to be a collective acceptance that the very nature of the administrative work involved with registration was stress inducing. This acknowledgment was important as it enabled staff to begin to think about ways of coping with stress rather than feeding the spiral of nervous energy that contributed to the department's "collective registration trauma". In addition to generating constructive evaluative data that was recorded for future reference and to provide the basis for action plans, the retreat also appeared to generate the kind of transformational energy that is usually associated with the emergence of a shared vision that can inform organizational development and change.

CHAPTER 3

Experiential Learning - An Overview

3.1 The Challenge Of Theorizing Experiential Learning

The development of an understanding of experiential learning that acknowledges the significance of the aesthetic domain and consequently the facilitative role of the Boal's "image theatre" requires the evaluation of prevailing definitions of experiential learning. By reviewing a range of available delineations of experiential learning we will be able to ascertain their scope and nature, assess their short comings and most importantly, explore the various understandings of experience on which they have been based. This preliminary mapping and the related literature review will provide an appropriate framework within which to theorize about the aesthetic dimension of experience, its exclusion from current discourses about experiential learning and the ways in which Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques address this exclusion.

There are a number of commentaries, studies and reviews that highlight the significance of experiential learning theory in current forms of higher, further and vocational education. (Henry 1989; Warner-Weil and McGill 1989; Cherrington and van Ments 1994; Lewis and Williams 1994; Evans 1994) Despite the widespread adoption and use of experiential learning approaches and methodologies, it remains difficult to identify a single comprehensive and precise definition of experiential learning or an all encompassing account of a methodology.

A review of the available literature, Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) Brookfield (1986), Warner Weil and McGill (1989), Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993), Lewis and Williams (1994) Cherrington and van Ments (1994) and Jarvis (1995) draws attention to the diversity of understandings, applications and meanings of experiential learning. As Hyland (1994) asserts, it is fair to conclude that experiential learning theory is an "umbrella term" bringing together a range of perspectives and practices.

In addition, a number of inter-related factors make it particularly difficult to define experiential learning. First and foremost, definitions by their very nature are "unstable" (Edwards 1994). Secondly, the term experiential learning itself is reliant on the notion of experience as a philosophically complex and ambiguous concept that is open to a variety of interpretations. (Jarvis 1995) In summary, it can be argued that the available delineations of experiential learning are no more than conceptual frameworks that are subject to ongoing re-workings and re-formulations. Hence, the meaning of experience in relation to our understanding of experiential learning is constantly being interrogated and contested.

This problem is further compounded by the common usage and prevalence of 'experience' as a descriptive term that has entered everyday language and thus become a repository for a range of common sense meanings and applications.

Jarvis (1995) draws attention to the extent to which imprecise interpretations of experience have in turn adversely affected our understandings of experiential learning. In highlighting the philosophical difficulties of accurately defining experience as a concept, the concerns expressed by Jarvis (1995) reflect a pre-occupation with clarity of meaning and precision. Hence, whereas Brah and Hoy (1989) Usher (1993); Edwards (1994), and Edwards and Usher (1995) are primarily concerned with laying bare the extent to which popular interpretations of experience and consequently experiential learning, limit our scope for critical inquiry and learning, the work of Jarvis (1995) in this area focuses on the general failure of experiential learning theorists to make a clear distinction between primary and secondary forms of experience.

In arguing for the importance of making this distinction Jarvis, citing Oakshott, explains that primary experience refers to direct forms of experience and implies direct participation and involvement, the actual doing of things, becoming physically involved. [1] In summary, Jarvis (1995) argues that by promoting instructional methodologies that rely on 'interactive' hands on and participative modes of learning, experiential theories down-play the significance of the less interactive instructional methods that rely on secondary experience.

Hence the less participative instructional mediums such as lectures and discussions are implicitly excluded by the

definitions of experiential learning that concentrate on inter-action and participation. This concern is echoed in the observations made by Cherrington and van Ments (1994) who in exploring the difficulty of adequately defining experiential learning practices cite Gredler (1992) to support their suggestion that interactive learning may be a more appropriate designation than experiential learning.

Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) suggest an understanding of experience that emphasizes holistic involvement and includes a search for meaning. For them, experiencing is more than mere sensing. This position is close to Dewey's (1938) delineation of experience that emphasizes personal involvement through interaction, reflection and creativity. In a similar vein Mulligan (1993) explains that experience includes a full range of senses, hence, imagining, feeling, remembering are involved. If we look at experience in this way we have an understanding of experience that incorporates both creative and rational forms of apprehension and comprehension. From this perspective we are opening up the opportunity to employ a broad range of facilitative modes. This is the background against which we need to consider the educational implications of Theatre of the Oppressed practices.

In presenting his argument for the adopting and working with a multi-dimensional approach to facilitating experiential learning Heron, (1993) an experiential learning theorist who has previously

been mentioned in this study, defines the affective, the imaginal and the conceptual domains as the structures through which we experience the world and impose meaning on our apprehension of it. He suggests these domains are integrated in a triangulated up-hierarchy, each one influencing our ability to apprehend and make sense of the world. Thus experience is multi-dimensional and Heron (1993) offers a holistic understanding of experience that is based on the assumption that cognition relies on the interactive engagement of our imaginal, conceptual and affective faculties. This multi-dimensional reading of the nature and scope of experience enhances our understanding of experiential learning and provides a framework for thinking about and making sense of the way in which the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices promotes learning through the process of drama.

3.2 Theorizing Experiential Learning - The Political Implications

A more politically motivated approach to understanding experience and its relationship to experiential learning is offered by the work of Brah and Hoy (1989), Usher (1993), Edwards (1994) and Usher and Edwards (1995). These critics of current practices of experiential learning draw attention to the way in which common sense interpretations of experience have shaped and limited prevailing constructions of experiential learning and its methodologies and practices. By deploying a post modernist critical framework that highlights the extensive influence of the social sciences on our current construction of both experience and experiential learning, Usher, (1993) Edwards (1994) and Usher and Edwards (1995), delineate the way in which our common sense presumptions about the nature of experience are reliant on discourses that have been shaped within the confines of specific social and cultural context.

In commenting on the current popularity of experiential learning and experiential learning practices, Usher (1993) convincingly argues that our everyday and common sense notions of experience are profoundly influenced by our need to construct and convey an idea of the self that corresponds with the dominant values of the environments within which we are located. From this perspective we can question the extent to which we can regard common sense and everyday accounts of experience as renditions of abstract and objective truths.

Usher (1993) argues that decontextualised individualistic understandings of the nature of personal experience informs much of the theorizing about experiential learning and the design of its methodologies. While Usher (1993) Usher and Edwards (1995) refrain from putting forward a coherent alternative to current practices in the area of experiential learning, he suggests that by thinking about 'learning from experience' instead of experiential learning, we may be able to escape from the modernist assumptions about the naturalness and inevitability of taken for granted readings of social reality.

While post-modernist perspectives are useful theoretical frameworks that can promote analysis, their extensive reliance on the critical deconstruction of social reality and their related rejection of emancipatory aspirations has attracted criticism from some quarters. Sivanandan (1990) in his forthright article "All That Melts Into Air Is Solid: The Hokum of The New Times" explores the ways in which post-modern critical perspectives can challenge and undermine the political aspirations of oppressed and marginalised groups by dismissing and undermining the validity of their emancipatory aspirations and visions. I would like to suggest that if we were to extend the critical trajectory established by Edwards (1994), Usher, (1992:1993) and Usher and Edwards (1994) through to its logical conclusion, we would find ourselves caught in an endless spiral of relativism.

Brah and Hoy, (1989) both practitioners in the area of adult education, are more specific in recommending that we turn away from popular experiential practices that rely on personal narratives as the starting point for experiential learning. They suggest instead that adult education practitioners need to explain the critical implications of taken for granted readings of social reality. For example, Brah and Hoy (1989) demonstrate that in order to promote understanding on the course Race, Society, Community students needed to develop a critical grasp of the implications of the 'situatedness' and historical specificity of their personal experience. [2] They explain that this understanding would enable them to frame and re-interpret their experiential knowledge of racism and racist practices. The underlying assumption here is that our everyday accounts of experience are unreliable starting points for learning. Brah and Hoy (1989) relate their concerns to what they perceive as the distorting effects of the contemporary emphasis on the authenticity of personal experience.

I would like to suggest that these rejections of popular constructions of experience and the related speculations about the implications for experiential learning, overlook the extent to which our everyday accounts and narratives of experience are in and of themselves dramatic presentations to which we are deeply attached.

Hornbrook (1998) in his recent edition of *Education and Dramatic Art* draws our attention to the ways in which contemporary life has been dramatized to the point of saturation via the extensive influence of the popular media. Hence television "soap operas" and "sit-coms" constantly problematize and resolve personal and social problems in the context of entertainment that is implicitly socially educational. It can be argued that our personal narratives of experience constitute our social histories, the parts of ourselves that we bring to our daily transactions with the world. These personal narratives rely extensively on the individual decoding and sense making of the visceral and sensorial elements of experience.

As Toni Morrison, the novelist explains narratives are important repositories of knowledge and understanding that provide accounts of what we know and how we know. Despite the inaccuracies imposed by our partial readings and representations of memory our experiences can be seen as special accounts that we invest with strong emotions and particular meanings. [3] In *Teaching to Transgress*, Hooks (1994) explores the pedagogical implications of autobiographical accounts of experience in the classroom. She explains that the sharing of stories, the "testimony" of personal narrative is an effective starting point for learning and understanding particularly for those people whose stories remain un-represented in dominant narratives and discourses.

Of course we cannot deny the ways in which socially and culturally based discourses have influenced the way we apprehend and make sense of experience and promote experiential learning.

The current popularity and emphasis on the construction of an independent and individualized 'self' that appears to float free of social and cultural constraints can be seen as a product of a post modern industrialised understanding of the self in society. In drawing attention to the flawed thinking that underlies education's contemporary emphasis on the acquisition of self knowledge, the importance of self reliance and the benefits of self directed learning, Usher and Edwards (1995) make an invaluable contribution. Yet it must be acknowledged that the post modernist perspectives that promote the reading of multiple and indeterminate meanings of experience open up the debate on the nature of experience and make it possible to accommodate more expansive definitions. Against this background we can set about theorizing experience and consequently experiential learning in ways that acknowledge the distinctive contribution of the aesthetic domain.

3.3 Experiential Learning Practices - As An Elaboration on A Theme

The overall aim of the section is to draw attention to the way in which a philosophical consideration of the Theatre of the Oppressed practices can provoke a conceptual re-visioning of common sense and everyday understandings of experience. Against this background we can consequently come to not only develop a broad recognition of the educational significance of the aesthetic domain, but also explore the implications of approaches to learning and development that are grounded in a commitment to a democratic interpretation of the role of education.

As previously indicated, experiential learning theories, instructional methodologies and techniques have been shaped by a wide range of interests, perspectives, agencies and context. Dewey's (1938) philosophical contribution allegedly provides the framework for much of the theorizing about the scope and nature of experiential learning. There are also a number of theories and models that have sought to elaborate on and adapt Dewey's philosophy to meet the needs of specific situations. The work of Mezirow (1981; 1990), Kolb (1984) and Argyris and Schon (1974; 1978) are examples of theoretical re-workings of Dewey that employ perspectives drawn from both the social sciences and management development in order to generate models of practice and techniques.

As previously indicated Dewey is recognized as the progressive philosophical voice that has inspired and informed much of the practice and theory that has developed in the area of experiential learning. (Lewis and Williams 1994) It should be noted that Dewey, as an early twentieth century American philosopher in the pragmatic tradition, was impressed by the practical forms of instruction that were then gaining popularity in schools. Thus inspired he sought to develop a philosophy of knowledge and learning that was practical and interactive. Dewey reasoned that the processes adopted by contemporary methods of scientific investigation could be effectively applied to experience and result in the promotion of learning. (Tomlinson 1997)

Learning in this context, Dewey reasoned should be a dynamic rather than passive process. Engagement and interaction were the key elements. It is important to note that Dewey recognized problems as the starting point for investigative deliberations. He maintained that hunches, intuitions and insights result in experimentation, which in turn could lead to further experimentation and resolutions. The review of the consequences and outcomes would promote either modification or confirmation of previous understandings or assumptions. This was an active problem solving model that promoted learning as a process of cognitive re-construction through experimentation and reflection.

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938) insists that a theory of experience is an indispensable starting point for learning

and fostering educational development. From this perspective Kolb's (1984; 1993) model, rather than being viewed as a theory of experiential learning must be seen as single interpretation of Dewey's philosophy on the reflective interrogation of experience. Kolb's (1984; 1993) model seeks to bring to the fore the processes underlying intellectual cognition in the context of higher and post secondary education.

There are other theories of experiential learning that focus on theorizing about interactive and participative learning in specific context. Freire's (1972) previously mentioned literacy method with its emphasis on "conscientization" and development in so far as it works with experience provides a theory of experiential learning that is widely used in popular education and aims to promote social and cultural change through awareness and community action. Mezirow's (1981; 1990) theory of experiential learning focuses on the promotion of individual change through transformational learning.

Mezirow's model is somewhat reliant on an adaptation of critical theory and can be seen as a reworking of theories of knowledge and reflection put forward by Habermas. (1972) [4] Both Kemmis (1995) and Welton (1993) elaborate on Habermas in ways that are more radical than Mezirow (1981; 1990). Most recently feminist pedagogies have sought to challenge both the philosophical and theoretical assumptions on which much of experiential learning theory is based. [5]

By drawing attention to the educational significance of the acquisition of gendered self knowledge through critical reflection these feminists theorist have marked out a distinctive pedagogical terrain with the area of adult and continuing education.

It should be noted that both state policies, and government initiatives and employer and industrial demands have also shaped prevailing approaches to, and applications of, experiential learning. It was during and after the economic depressions of the 1930's and the 1940's that the U.S. government agencies and employers came together to promote experiential approaches to work based and employer led training and education. (Lewis and Williams 1994) This alliance of government and industrial interest is still influential in the United Kingdom and is supported by the very way in which some interpretations and formulations of experiential learning have emerged. [6]

Despite its radical forging of disparate philosophical and theoretical perspectives Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning also demonstrates the influences of the context within which it is being applied. The model was originally developed as a "modern" and progressive re-framing of the aims of higher education. The aim was to promote the professional development of the American graduate students with whom it was developed. The work of Argyris and Schon (1978) and Argyris, Putman and Smith, (1985) Schon (1987) further extends Kolb's (1984) "experiential" approach to professional development.

The "case study" method developed by these action science theorists aims to promote forms of work related professional development that are grounded in the modern values of individualistic autonomy. [7]

In summary, it must be pointed out that there is no single theory or model of experiential learning, rather there are many theories, that claim to be grounded in Dewey's innovative philosophical theorizing of experience. As demonstrated in the preceding discussion, these theories, based on interpretations of Dewey, have been translated into approaches and techniques that have in turn given rise to specific areas of practice and application. The practical context of adult and continuing education has provided the primary framework within which much of experiential learning and its associated practices have been defined. As a result, our interpretations and understandings of experiential learning have become infused with the language, values and politics of the various practices of adult education.

3.4 Re-thinking Experiential Learning

In this section I would like suggest that Dewey's (1934) important definition of "esthetics" and creativity as distinctive modes of experience that promote cognition have all but been ignored. An exploration of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques and an assessment of their significance as experiential modes of practice that facilitate learning is an important contribution to the revival of Dewey's original perspective.

In *How We Think*, Dewey (1933) sought to philosophically work with, and through, a broad and comprehensive conceptualization of experience that drew extensively on a Darwinian understanding of the interactive transactions conducted by organisms with their environments. In understanding experience as being multi-dimensional and in correspondence with the multi-dimensional structures of organisms, Dewey recognized the complex and hybrid patterns of transactional interaction as a central feature of an equally complex reading of the nature of experience. It is important to note that these transactional patterns range from the material level of the kinesthetic sensorial to the mental level of abstract rationality.

This means that the full scope of experiential encounters that we can have are covered. The "abstract" aspects of thinking and the sensorial elements of feeling are presented as integrated rather than separate and oppositional features of experience.

The emotions, the imagination and the senses are all rationally configured as constituent parts of the process of thinking. This approach to understanding and making sense of cognition has important implications for our understanding of how we "use" experience to promote learning. I would like to suggest that through the use of drama, Theatre of the Oppressed explicitly relies on the emotional, imaginative and the sensorial aspects of "experiencing" in ways that correspond with Dewey's (1933) observations about the inter-relatedness of thinking and reflection. Theatre of the Oppressed encourages the development of a primarily qualitative reading of experience. This reading privileges and works with the material and concrete aspects of action, we can see how this focus on action falls well within the parameters of experiential learning practice.

Education theorists who seek to define and develop variations of experiential learning and its related practices and methods often refer to Dewey as an inspirational source. (Argyris & Schon 1974; Kolb 1984; Heron 1993;) While it is clear that Dewey's work has been profoundly influential, it is doubtful whether much of what has been written fully represents the broad scope of Dewey's pre-occupation with defining the role of education. As indicated in the preceding section of this study Dewey was not only concerned with providing a scientific approach to the interrogation of human action, he also wanted to define education as the framework for the development of modes of inquiry that generated the knowledge required to improve social

relations and the institutions that support the democratic arrangement of society. (Dewey 1954)

In *Democracy and Education* Dewey outlines his understanding of "ethics" as a moral science, against this background he explores the implications for educational practice. Learning from and through experience was meant to do more than simply generate useful knowledge. For Dewey (1938) the specificity and immediacy of the knowledge that emerges from a scientific approach to the appraisal of experience was meant to be educational in the sense that it fostered the critical "adaptation" and adjustment of organisms to their immediate environments.

It is important that we relate this understanding of the adaptive role of knowledge to Dewey's elaborate conceptualization of a "naturalistic theory of experience". This means that, at the most basic level, as living organisms, our meaning structures are shaped and to some extent defined by our ongoing interactive relationship with the environments in which we operate. It must be noted that Dewey is not suggesting here a reductionist reading of human development that suggests that as living organisms we are completely controlled by environmental conditions. Rather, he consistently emphasizes the importance of continuously working on and working out the full implications of moral values in the context of the habits and actions of lived experience.

The "deliberative reflection"" involved in the working out of what Dewey refers to as the "ideals" of democracy, freedom and justice is a key component of his educational vision. [8] We may become concerned with Dewey's failure to provide a definitive model of these ideals that he identifies as the parameters of educational endeavors and practices. Yet to reject the validity of his position on this basis is to lose sight of his particular understanding of the way in which his scientific model of inquiry suggests an on-going engagement and constant reworking of the meaning of our immediate conditions. Hence education, and educational activities have an important role in the development and elaboration of the moral values we hold and draw upon.

Hence, for Dewey re-constructive modes of inquiry are not only context based explorations of concrete reality, they are also the expression of a desire to work towards the achievement of idealistic values. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) seeks to rewrite traditional understandings of education and educational activities by framing problem solving modes of inquiry. He suggests that we rely on the deliberative and reflective activity of working between collectively held social and moral ideals and individual versions of experience. Hence, education in this context must be understood as an integral component of a broader quest for democratic freedom. This can be seen as a philosophical recognition of the social dimension of learning.

As Dewey (1938) explains:

"it is the job of the educational system to foster freedom of thought by helping individuals to think better, to observe more clearly and to judge more adequately". [9]

I would like to argue here that this kind of thinking requires the active engagement of the imagination as an integral component of the way in which we apprehend and make sense of the world. In "How We Think" Dewey (1933) suggests that the imaginative and affective structures of experience are the background structures of cognition that shape and determine our capacity to make meaning. His fundamental proposition is that as holistic "experiencing" organisms these background structures of apprehension are integral and indispensable components of thinking that energize cognition and foster our capacity to "intellectualize". This broad understanding of "how we think" and experience the process of problem solving challenges traditional "positivist" assumptions about the abstract and emotionally neutral nature of cognition in the context of problem solving. Instead we are offered a reading of cognition that recognizes the importance of the affective dimension of experience and insists on an inclusive reading of experience that brings the underlying qualities of the imagination and the creative sensibilities to the fore.

As previously indicated, some theorists of experiential learning notably Kolb, (1984) and Mulligan (1993) have sought to draw attention to the educational significance of the affective and

sensorial components of "experiencing". Yet Heron (1993) is the only theorist who really suggests ways of working with what he refers to as the "imaginal" domain. It is clear that in seeking to make sense of the way in which Theatre of the Oppressed works with the aesthetic domain of experience in order to promote what Freire (1972) would refer to as cultural literacy, one is taking up and exploring Dewey's interpretation of experience that has been largely overlooked by those who work with and write about experiential learning practices and approaches. [10]

This shift away from Dewey's broader interpretation may be related to the defining influence of the context within which experiential approaches are developed and elaborated on. Consequently, in extending on prevailing understanding of experience, this study calls attention to the significance of Dewey's philosophical contribution to education. More importantly, this study effectively continues the tradition of elaborating on the established theme of experiential learning by defining a distinctive area of experiential learning practice.

3.5 Defining Experiential Learning - A Discussion

The preceding sections have provided an overview of the theoretical frameworks that have given rise to contemporary debates about the nature and scope of experiential learning. It is important to now move on to establishing a continuum of definitions that demonstrates the broad range of understandings and applications of experiential learning. This shift is based on the assumption that a continuum is a very useful framework that can help us to review and make sense of a range of definitions of experiential learning. At one extreme we can locate the most basic and what Cherrington and van Ments (1994) define as the "broadest" definitions. These are simple definitions that for the most part present experiential learning as an unproblematic concept that is virtually self-explanatory. These definitions often reflect the already mentioned assumption that all learning to a greater or lesser extent is experiential. (Jarvis 1995)

In sharp contrast, at the other end of the spectrum are definitions that seek to convey the complexity, diversity and contradictions that characterize the theorizing and practice of experiential learning. Lying mid-way between these two extremes are the definitions that are situation and context specific and that have emerged as a result of distinctive understandings of experience and experiential learning.

An example of one of the simplest definitions of experiential learning is:

"Experiential learning is learning that occurs by and through experience." [11]

Cherrington and van Ments (1994) characterize this definition as belonging to the "broadest" category of definitions of experiential learning. These are rather vague and general definitions that usually assume a straightforward understanding of experiential learning and an un-problematic reading of experience. Cherrington and van Ments (1994) go on to point out that these definitions reflect the general air of vagueness that many educators adopt when they are speaking about or defining experiential learning. In fact, these broad definitions if taken to their logical conclusion imply that all learning is experiential. Most importantly, definitions like this one assume that there is a common understanding of what is meant by experience and often overlook the extent to which its everyday and common sense usages and assumptions obscure the philosophical complexity of the meaning of experience. (Jarvis 1995)

In an attempt to signal the importance of involvement and to imply some level of sensorial interaction Keeton (1976) in the text, *Experiential Learning* suggest that:

"Experiential learning refers to learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied" [12]

This definition clearly seeks to suggest a bit more, although the attempt to draw attention to the participative elements of experiential learning remains tentative. Once again, much of the vagueness and imprecision that Cherrington and van Ments (1994) complain about in their review of experiential methodologies is present here.

The next definition differs substantively as it is located much nearer to the mid-point of the continuum and is more situation specific.

"Experiential Learning occurs when skills and knowledge can be applied in an immediate, relevant and meaningful setting". [13]

In drawing attention to the accumulation and replication of competencies, Brookfield (1986) provides us with a definition of experiential learning that is useful for describing practicums, apprenticeships and internships.

Like all of the preceding definitions there is very little indication of the theoretical assumption on which it is based.

A far more elaborate definition that draws extensively on Kolb's theory of experiential learning is provided by Lewis and Williams:

"In its simplest form, experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses the learner in an experience to develop new skills, then encourages reflection about

the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes and new ways of thinking." [14]

In addition to drawing attention to the theoretical principles that inform the definition, this is an outline of a basic instructional model. As indicated, Lewis and Williams (1994) have chosen to base their definition of experiential learning on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, the most popular and widely used theoretical construct. [15] By presenting experiential learning as a sequenced cyclical process, Lewis and Williams (1994) have sought to remain faithful to Kolb's reflective cycle.

This definition allows us to make a clear distinction between the interactive dynamics of experiential learning and the more static patterns of traditional forms of teaching. Thus the definition implies that experiential learning involves more than the randomness of vicarious action. There is also the suggestion that the outcome of learning is more than replication, but is rather the formulation of something new and different. This introduces an important element by suggesting that the outcome of each individual's learning is likely to differ. On this basis we can conclude that the outcomes of experiential learning are equally likely to be variable and un-predictable.

The final definition of experiential learning is located at the far end of the continuum and is very different from the ones that have been presented and discussed so far.

This descriptive delineation of the scope of experiential learning seeks to convey a diverse range of interpretations and applications:

"Experiential learning refers to a spectrum of meanings practices and ideologies which emerge out of the work and commitments of policy makers, trainers, change agents and ordinary people all over the world. They see experiential learning with different meanings as relevant to the challenges they currently face in their personal lives, in education institutions, in commerce, in industry in communities and in society as a whole." [16]

More than any of the preceding definitions, this one provided by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) suggests the phenomenal growth and widespread use and application of experiential learning methodologies. By highlighting the diversity and multiplicity of practices, Warner Weil and McGill's (1989) definition draws attention to the implausibility of a meaningful all inclusive delineation that addresses the implication of all applications. The primary shortcoming of Warner Weil and Mc Gill's (1989) own attempt to map experiential learning is the range of its descriptive bias that precludes any inclusion or even reference to theory. [17]

As we can see from the preceding discussion, there is no shared consensus or agreed understanding of the meaning of experiential learning. This may be because we are dealing with an area of adult and continuing education that is effectively "a work in progress", subject to constant re-definition and refinement.

SECTION 11

CHAPTER 4

Experiential Learning - Practices and Applications

4.1 Experiential Learning Towards A Descriptive Typology

Although the preceding reviews of experiential learning raise a number of philosophical and theoretical considerations, they do not provide a reliable account of contemporary practices of experiential learning. Hence it may be appropriate to develop a more descriptive analysis of the scope of experiential practices. This can in turn contribute to the development of an understanding of the way in which the various experiential learning practices and approaches reflect different understandings of experience and its educational uses. As previously indicated Freire, (1972) Prentki (1996), Taylor, (1993) and Kerr (1995) all acknowledge the educational significance of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. In order to move beyond simplistic assertions about the instructional validity of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices, we need to examine the scope and nature of established experiential learning practices.

It is important to ascertain the extent to which established experiential learning practices explicitly acknowledge the educational significance of the aesthetic domain by using the creative expressive arts in order to facilitate and promote learning. It is helpful to note that Warner Weil and McGill (1989) in seeking to delineate and make sense of the complex terrain of experiential learning have put forward the practice based framework of "villages".

They have identified four key "villages" or areas of experiential practice: Village One: the Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, Village Two: Experiential Learning and Change in Post-school Education and Training, Village Three: Experiential Learning and Social Change and Village Four: Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development.

The four 'villages' defined by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) are not mutually exclusive categories and as such they cannot claim to be authoritative delineations of well defined areas of theory and practice. Rather, the metaphor of "villages" appropriately conveys the ways in which the practices and their related techniques and methods are clustered into these somewhat artificially defined parameters. The designation "villages" also provides an indication of the potential for contentious and conflicting affiliations and cleavages.

Cherrington and van Ments (1994) and Henry (1989) have also sought to map and make sense of the complex terrain of experiential learning practices by conducting a small scale survey of the extent of the use of experiential practices among higher and adult education practitioners. The limited and un-representative nature of the samples used in both of these studies makes it impossible to use the data to make general or conclusive observations.

Despite these drawbacks, the results of these two studies provides a useful check-list of the range of experiential practices and techniques that are used by practitioners in the areas that were reviewed.

By considering Warner Weil and McGill's (1989) outline of experiential learning villages together with Henry (1989) and Cherrington and van Ments (1994) it is possible to obtain a fairly comprehensive indication of the range of contemporary experiential learning applications and their associated practices. The integration of these three largely descriptive accounts facilitates the imposition of order on a somewhat incoherent terrain and lays the groundwork for developing a descriptive framework. While Warner Weil and McGill (1989), Cherrington and van Ments (1994) and Henry (1989) are the main sources that will be drawn on additional commentaries will also be used.

As indicated previously the primary aim of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the various ways in which adult educators make sense of and work with experience. In addition the chapter will explore the extent to which established experiential learning approaches and practices acknowledge the educational significance of the aesthetic domain and the educational implications of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices.

4.1.1 Experiential Learning And The Accreditation of Prior Learning

Village One, the Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) relies on the assumption that adults, in the course of conducting their day to day activities and responsibilities, acquire and develop a substantial level of problem solving, planning and activity based skills and competencies. It is further argued that frequently we are unaware of the true scope and level of our competence and abilities. This may be re-enforced by negative or unpleasant past experiences of formal education. It is generally believed that APEL provides the interpretative framework within which undervalued skills can be recognized, documented and presented as qualifications. These credentials can in turn establish candidates eligibility for admission to further and higher levels of education.

Trowler, (1996) Webb and Redhead, (1992) Droegkamp and Taylor (1995) note that one of the primary achievements of APEL is its provision of opportunities to populations that have traditionally been excluded or under represented in further and higher education. For example, through APEL employees can convert their work related experiences to college credits and obtain exemption from classroom work. People who have traditionally been denied access to, and consequently excluded from, higher and further education because of institutionalized discriminatory practices based on race, gender and physical ability also benefit

from the opportunities provided by APEL. Saltiel (1995) emphasizes that higher education institutions have always recognized the value of the experiences of their mature students. He goes on to point out that this has traditionally taken the form of informal recognition determined on a case by case basis by departmental heads. APEL provides a formal system of assessment and accreditation.

In tracing the historical development of APEL, Schwartz and Swinerton (1995) point out that an important milestone of APEL's development in the United States of America was the 1970 Carnegie Report that called for opportunities for adults to obtain degrees without attending classes. This, they argue, contributed to the emergence of a number of alternative educational institutions. Colleges like Thomas Edison State College, Charter Oak College, Regents College and the State University of New York are cited as having all been specifically established to meet the needs of non traditional adult learners. In recruiting adults, these institutions offer alternative modes of accreditation and assessment.

Over the past two decades, APEL initially developed in the United States of America, has attained widespread international popularity and is now used extensively in the United Kingdom, Western Europe and Asia. (Schwartz and Swinerton 1995). In response to this widespread recognition of the educational significance of the experience of adults, an extensive range

of assessment and appraisal practices and procedures have emerged. These evaluative approaches are specifically designed to address and interrogate the particular experiences of non-traditional students. The College Level Exam (CLEP), and Portfolio Assessment are two of the most widely known evaluative approaches to APEL used in the United States of America. The Program on Non Collegiate Sponsored Instruction and Recognized Accreditation (PNSIRA) is an American national organization that provides a structured approach to the assessment and accreditation, of prior learning. In the United Kingdom portfolios have become a popular instrument of development and evaluation. (Challis, 1993; Evans, 1992).

APEL portfolios usually consist of descriptive accounts and or items and artifacts that provide evidence of the accomplishments of prospective students. One of the main strengths of portfolio development and presentation is its provision of the opportunity for learners to identify and critically reflect on the nature and scope of their experience of non formal learning. It is believed that the required reflective engagement can result in heightened self esteem and promote self empowerment. (Droegkamp and Taylor, 1995; Taylor, 1995; Paczuska, 1992) In commenting on the use of APEL to promote the access of women to opportunities to study in the area of science and technology, Paczuska (1992) points out that in addition to helping these women recognize and credit the relevance of the transferable skills and knowledge they brought to the area, APEL also served

as a supportive intervention within which the women were able to make sense of the structural factors that have promoted the traditional exclusion of women from the areas of science and technology.

Webb and Redhead (1992) offer a case study that further supports the idea of APEL as a source of potential empowerment. They describe the way in which the basic approach of APEL, promoted the development of activist and campaigning skills among a group of ordinary 'homemakers'. In Webb and Redhead's (1992) British based example, APEL provided the reflective framework within which a group of women were able to ask and negotiate for access to additional educational resources and facilities. Hence APEL in these instance served as a transformative and empowering educational framework.

I would like to suggest that despite its progressive achievements, APEL remains a problematic domain of experiential learning. Satiel (1995) list four contentious areas: APEL's controversial reputation; the lack of uniformity in standards; the unclear distinction between what counts as training and what counts as education; and finally the frustration of adult students with the complexity of the administrative and operational bureaucracies of colleges and higher education institutions in general.

Warner Weil and McGill (1989), Evans (1992) and Butler (1993) identify the primary beneficiaries of APEL as women, ethnic minorities and other groups that have been traditionally discriminated against and excluded from higher and further education. While this may be true, it is important to note that APEL is now increasingly incorporated as an integral element of the rhetoric and promise of economic regeneration programs that seek to raise levels of employment. APEL, in this context, is often defined and promoted in messianic terms that predict the advent of a technological millennium and the related need for a multi-skilled work force.

Trowler (1996) contends that in many ways this emphasis on "credit exchange" contradicts the developmental and transformative pre-occupations espoused by the underlying philosophy of APEL provision. (Evans 1997) It can be asserted that the overall effect of the multiple applications and uses of APEL is the establishment of a continuum of interpretations of APEL that reflects the tensions, contradictions and politics of contemporary education. In defining APEL as simply the way in which one can exchange accounts of past experience for acceptable college credits, there is a danger of commodifying experiential learning and distorting its original progressive and developmental aspirations.

Although APEL may encourage learners to recognize their personal experiences as significant sources of knowledge and learning, the defining perspective within which APEL often operates can determine the scope and nature of the reflective engagement that is promoted. This raises more general questions about the extent to which the institutional context into which experiential learning principles and practices are being introduced can in turn distort the original aspirations and the philosophy of the "experiential" approach to the promotion of learning. [1]

4.1.2 Experiential Learning In The Context Of Post Compulsory Education and Training

The second village delineated by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) spans the approaches and practices associated with what they refer to as "Experiential Learning and Change in Post-school Education and Training". In this "village" the emphasis is on promoting a shift away from traditional approaches to the design and delivery of courses in further, higher and continuing education, employment, work related training, and human resource development. The current interest of the post compulsory education and training sectors in experiential learning has coincided with a number of key developments. These include a growing interest in the development of critical thinking skills and problem solving competencies among tertiary level learners. (Perry, 1970),

In addition to the growth in interest in self directed learning (Tough 1979; Knowles 1980; Knox 1989) there has been an increased emphasis on developing strategies and approaches that will improve the quality of teaching in higher and post compulsory education institutions. One of the main areas of development is the expansion of the range of instructional practices and the related conduct of their assessment. (Entwistle, 1983; Taylor and Burgess. 1995) These developments have coincided with a corresponding shift away from traditional models of instruction that stress the teacher and the text as the primary sources of knowledge.

Instead, there is a growing acknowledgment of the value of the experiences of students and the use of these experiences as the basis for the kind of reflection that promotes learning. At the heart of this understanding of experiential learning practice is a commitment to human action as a source of learning and knowledge that is inspired by the philosophical principles outlined by Dewey. (1938) [2] Practitioners operating within the context of village two, have in many instances drawn extensively on the disciplines of psychology and social psychology in order to develop instructional practices that differ sharply from traditional pedagogy. Hence Jacques (1984) incorporates theories on group dynamics and inter-personal communications in order to delineate instructional practices that encourage the active participation of students.

Many instructors and lecturers in post compulsory education institutions are encouraging students to learn and reflect on how they are learning in group settings. Careful distinctions are made between the process of how people go about learning in groups and the product or "what" they learn. The establishment of this distinction between the 'process' and the 'product' dimensions of learning in small groups has resulted in the adoption of instructional strategies that emphasize facilitative rather than directive approaches to instruction and the promotion of learning.

The spread of these innovations within post compulsory education and training has influenced the establishment of elaborate and in some instances very sophisticated learning and assessment strategies that rely extensively on the full participation and the large scale "doings" of students in higher education. Avis, (1995) Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985), Warner and McGill (1989) and Lewis and Williams (1994) note that Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, or rather reflection, is by far the most popular source of inspiration in the areas of course design, instructional guidance and facilitation. [3]

It can be said that the strength of Kolb's (1984) model lies in its claim to help both instructors and students democratically manage the process of reflection in ways that promote learning. By recognizing and making distinctions among the various stages of reflective engagement, Kolb (1984) draws attention to the educational value of distinguishing concrete experience from reflection and abstract conceptualization from active experimentation. The recognition of these stages of the reflective cycle enables both learners and instructors to increase the opportunity for supportive teaching interventions and opportunities for learning.

On the other hand, Kolb's (1984) failure to question or discuss the social and political implications of his delineation of experiential knowledge must be raised.

The main questions that need to be asked are to what extent has Kolb's work really challenged established epistemological assumptions about experience and how far does Kolb's reflective model promote the forms of moral and social critical inquiry espoused by Dewey? Hence it can be argued that although instructional approaches within the areas of post compulsory education and training may have somewhat reduced a reliance on didactic approaches to instruction, and their stress on empirical and positivist constructions of knowledge, a wide spread acceptance and promotion of an alternative or radical epistemology has not materialized.

I would like to suggest that some fundamental considerations remain largely unchallenged in most training and higher education settings. For example, the political implications of the structural relations within the classroom and the institution as a whole are rarely questioned or explored as part of the educational process. This is further re-enforced by the academic tradition of "objectivity". The extent to which the actual management of learning reflects the exploitative conditions and dynamics of the wider social and political environment is rarely ever made explicit except on occasions when it is the focus of theoretical discourse. (Preston 1995) [4]

From the perspective of experiential learning, this is contradictory, as it allows large areas of the most immediate

experience of learning itself to remain unexamined and beyond the boundaries of a critical and analytical gaze. Under these conditions learners are encouraged to become adept at assembling available perspectives in approved ways.

While the interactive and participative approaches put forward by both Lewin (1951) and Kolb (1984) draw attention to human action as a site of knowledge and cognition, they pay very little attention to the political and social structures that shape and in many cases determine the scope of human action, experience, reflection and learning. When discourses about the significance of ideological orientations are not explicitly drawn into the exploration of experience, then personal accounts and explanations of human action are taken out of their particular and specific historical context. [5]

As previously explained, Brah and Hoy (1989) argue that instructors should seek to encourage students or learners to situate their personal accounts of experience by locating them in appropriate historical perspectives that are critical in their approach and focus. This means that the sharing of personal experiences in learning groups must move beyond the boundaries of the therapeutic model that "action science" theorists like Lewin (1951), Argyris and Schon (1974) have extensively drawn on. [6]

I wish to suggest that the way in which we experience and respond to the world depends largely on the influence of the material, cultural and social conditions that shape our lives. Hence factors such as class, race, gender and ethnicity are powerful determinants that influence how we read the world and in turn contribute to the way in which the world reads us both as individuals and as groups. Hence if we are seeking to ground learning in experience, the ways in which we think about and delineate the nature of experience must be taken into account.

The preceding discussion demonstrates that we have come to rely on an overly narrow "common sense" definition of the nature of experience and our role as social agents. This simplistic and matter of fact reading of the things we do and why we do them, owes much to the influence of the 'humanist' philosophical perspectives that appear to operate beyond the boundaries imposed by a critical reading of the scope and nature of social reality. The influential work of adult education and development theorists like Rogers, (1980) Kolb, (1984) Daloz, (1990) Knox (1989) and Knowles (1980) all draw on this 'humanist' perspective.

Consequently, although the introduction of experiential learning practices in post compulsory education and training has resulted in the adoption of more participative, democratic and student centered approaches to instruction and the facilitation of learning, the transformative promise of education that was

philosophically explored by Dewey (1938) and more recently theorized by the radical work of Freire (1972) remains largely un-realized.

Despite these shortcomings, the introduction and promotion of experiential learning approaches and practices into post compulsory education and training has brought into focus the significance of attending to the experience of learning as a distinctive process in and of itself. Increasingly, meta-cognition, and thinking about learning are seen as being just as important as what is being learned. (Smith 1981)

A good example of the reflective process of problem solving is provided in Brew's (1993) already mentioned account of experiential learning. She explains how her "mindfulness" enabled her to connect seemingly disparate events in her personal life and read instructive meaning into them. This in turn enhanced her understanding of herself and her place in the world. While Brew's (1993) example draws extensively on the work of the philosopher Susan Langer, (1953) the focus is on the emergence of self knowledge through the process of visiting and revisiting assumptions that may have been held dearly as accurate and true representations of the nature of social reality. Here, reflection contributes to a critical dis-assembly of meanings and long held understandings of personal experience.

[7]

Bateson's, previously mentioned (1979) *Peripheral Visions - Learning Along the Way*, provides an extended account of how learning is enhanced by critical modes of reflection that develop and expand self knowledge. Bateson's (1994) largely philosophical account chronicles the way in which her exposure to the different foreign cultures and cultural practices of Iran and the Philippines contributed to her personal growth and a consequent re-conceptualization of herself. [8] As previously indicated, the recognition of how learning in the context of schooling, is enhanced by critical reflection on human action and experience is one of most important achievements of Village Two, *Experiential Learning and Development in Post school Education and Training*.

By valuing the experiential knowledge of students and promoting its reflective interrogation, this village has promoted the recognition of the educational value of self knowledge arising out of reflection on experience. This is an important contribution to our understanding of learning at the post compulsory level. Yet it must be acknowledged that the broader implications of village two's conservative and traditional readings of the nature of social reality, the role of critical reflection and self knowledge are severely limiting. As I have already explained, it is important to recognize that experiences are located in particular situational contexts within which they must be examined. [9]

The current incorporation of 'experience' as a valid resource for learning and development in post compulsory education and training excludes any outright consideration of approaches and practices that work with the aesthetic domain of experience. The value of the arts as instructional and facilitative mediums is not raised in the literature. In order to address this short-coming we need to do more than simply insert drama, art, music or other forms of creative expression into the experiential curriculum of post compulsory education and training. Instead we need to develop an understanding of experience that enables us to undertake a philosophical consideration of the educational significance of the aesthetic domain.

4.1.3 Experiential Learning For Social Change

The third cluster or "village" of experiential learning applications put forward by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) is Experiential Learning For Social Change. Within this cluster of approaches, learning from experience is often seen as a collective undertaking that aims to promote social and political empowerment and leads to emancipatory forms of social action on the part of individuals and groups. Instructional methodologies that operate within this framework are usually inspired by an open acknowledgment of a desire to challenge the injustices of prevailing social and economic systems. Against this background education is defined as an important arena within which it is possible to work with the social dimension of learning.

While community education is often used to cover a wide spectrum of educational activities, those that seek to promote social change and activism are broadly referred to as popular education. (Torres and Fischman, 1994) As previously indicated, popular education approaches are specifically designed to challenge economic and social inequality and to promote social and political action. For example, although the stated educational objective of a program for women in a run-down inner city area may be the provision of employment training, there are wider issues of empowerment and personal development.

It is possible to bring forward and examine underlying issues like the material, social and cultural conditions that have contributed to the women's experiences of social and economic marginalization

This is of course markedly different from the traditional approaches to pedagogy that have strenuously sought to remain ostensibly apolitical and value free. Experiential learning practices that are informed by the philosophical and political perspectives that shape village three are based on the assumption that all knowledge is defined by related ideological considerations. For example, it can be argued that the way in which we decide what areas of science are important and worthy of study depends to great extent on the social values and ideals we hold and adhere to. These considerations are determined in ways that are neither scientific or objective. Hence it can be asserted that the sciences in spite of the perception of their widely accepted neutrality, independence and objectivity are framed by subjective, value driven and in some ways irrational discourses.

As previously explained, hooks (1994) uses the political dynamics of the social practices of the classroom in order to demonstrate to students the complexity of the power relations that define the scope of educational activities. She effectively asserts her commitment to working with and addressing the personal experiences of students and helping them to locate themselves

within a broader critical social framework. She does this by moving between the 'formal' written text of the established curriculum and the 'informal' lived text of students' personal and social experience. Her aim is to promote a recognition and understanding of education as a social practice that reflects the values of the dominant ideological orientations.

In this example, the literature class becomes the forum for the conduct of a collective form of critical inquiry, a central component of the Experiential Learning for Social Change practices that are associated with village three. Hence various understandings and interpretations of issues are mapped, theoretical and epistemological perspectives are developed and students are encouraged to develop a critical understanding. As previously explained, these positions are grounded in an explicitly ethical and moral framework that seeks to promote the egalitarian principles of social justice, equality of opportunity and the equitable distribution of the earth's resources.

In questioning the validity of a static objective and positivist understanding of the nature of knowledge, the practices and approaches associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change, rely on a more flexible and dynamic reading of the nature of knowledge than those that are associated with Village Two, Experiential Learning and Development in Post school Education and Training.

One of the criticisms that can be brought against this cluster of experiential learning practices that are associated with social change is that the emphasis on the political and social dimension of learning reduces their capacity to promote the acquisition of the "hard skills" that many of those who are marginalized and oppressed urgently need in order to survive. In describing a Soweto based media project Criticos (1989) provides a detailed account of the ways in which the political concerns of Experiential Learning for Social Change can be incorporated within a curriculum that meets learners needs to acquire what are often referred to as "hard" skills.

Torres (1994) in an account of a U.S.A. based literacy program aimed at a San Francisco Latina community explores the problems that can occur when education is inappropriately politicized. He carefully outlines the dangers of developing inappropriate curricula that are too reliant on political idealism and empty rhetoric. Torres (1994) concludes that "conscientization" must address the immediate and real lived experience of learners and should avoid being patronizing or unrealistic in its expectations. Practices associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change present a number of additional areas of concern that need to be highlighted.

Some of these concerns arise out of the implications of an overwhelming reliance on the theoretical and methodological contributions of Freire (1972) and the almost virtual exclusion

of other important theorists who have made substantial contributions to the area of community and activist education.

The comparatively high visibility and consequent popularity of Paulo Freire, during his lifetime, has resulted in the extensive re-interpretation and adaptations of his theories and methodology. It has been asserted that these have simplified and ultimately distorted the original focus. (Collins, 1991; Taylor, 1992)

[9] Despite the existence of important alternative philosophical perspectives that seek to politicize the practice of education there is a tendency to label all radical teaching approaches Freirian. This ignores the long tradition of radical and progressive education that extends all the way back to the pragmatic philosophy of Dewey. As previously explained in this study's preceding literature review, the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976) Illich (1971), Nyrere (1968) and more recently McLaren (1983) and Giroux (1993) signpost a rich terrain of radical social theories of education that have consistently challenged orthodox assumptions about the nature of education.

This area of experiential practice is being constantly elaborated and extended as radical challenges continue to emerge. The more recent pronouncements of what may be seen as a post-feminist pedagogy signals a nuanced elaboration of this radical tradition. (Tisdell, 1993) Some interpretations of feminist pedagogy have sought to draw attention to the inter-connected nature of the psychological and social dimensions

of action, and the difficulty of effectively elaborating on the psycho-social aspects of what and why we do the things we do. Hence the psycho-analytical perspectives developed by feminist scholars like Hart (1985) have innovatively drawn on the work of both Freud and Habermas in order to elaborate on the scope of Freire's delineation of "conscientization". Hart's (1985) primary aim is to encourage a fuller understanding of the inter-connectedness of the psychological and the social dimensions of social learning and agency. This means recognizing and paying particular attention to the ways in which the emotional and the affective components of our identities influence and shape our capacity for social and political action. [10]

By drawing on psycho-analytical theories of inter-personal communication, Hart (1985) explores the connectedness of inter and intra-personal forms of communication and concludes that internal psycho-dynamic processes are a significant prelude to social action. In demonstrating that 'critical' dialogue is both a psychological and a social process, Hart (1985) emphasizes that the adoption of oppositional and radical political positions that contest the established understandings of social reality, requires the development of a corresponding socio-psychological re-orientation at both the individual and collective levels of consciousness. Hart (1985) supports her argument by providing an account of the socio-psychological dynamics involved in "consciousness raising" activities in a women's collective.

She draws attention to the intensive level of emotional involvement that is required.

In summary, Hart's (1985) reworking of Habermas' understanding of critical theory supports the use of psycho-analytical interventions that are grounded in very specific political aspirations and intentions. [11] This is an important elaboration of the theoretical framework that underpins the experiential learning practices that are associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning For Social Change. It must be noted that in emphasizing the need for systemic change through collective action, proponents and supporters of village three have tended to be critical of the ways in which the rhetoric and the values of psychology and social psychology have shaped the practices and approaches of experiential learning.

As previously indicated, the critical perspective of Brah and Hoy, (1989) Usher, (1993) and Usher and Edwards (1994) are all dismissive of the influence of psychology and its related areas. [12] I wish to argue here that by rejecting "therapeutic" approaches altogether, we are in effect giving scant attention to the significance of the psycho-social dimension of being, the value of personal narratives, and the connectedness of identity and auto-biographical accounts of experience. Although these may be considered mere fictions, and from a post-modern perspective, the by-products of an "essentialist" reading of the nature of social reality, our interpretations and emotional

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responses to ourselves, to others and to our environment are inter-connected and cannot simply be dismissed, as we are deeply attached to them. Hence in the context of education they should be taken into account and critically explored.

Consequently, the way forward may be towards an elaboration of Freire's (1972) notion of dialogue which he actually undertakes in his later work. (1997; 1998) [13] This particular reading of the nature of dialogical engagement would promote a definition of "conscientization" that speaks directly to a psycho-social construction of personal identity. This definition stresses the significance of individual inclinations, preferences and dispositions and acknowledges that they may be unpredictable and in some instances downright arbitrary considerations.

For example, it can be asserted that my identity as an African-Caribbean woman is inscribed by both general and particular socio-historical conditions. At one level there is the common, inescapable legacy of Caribbean slavery and colonialism. This cultural inheritance is shared with contemporary, preceding and future generations of Caribbean women.

At another level and of equal significance are the conditions of my own specific and particular circumstances, considerations like my family background, kinship networks, life style practices, personal interest and preferences. These are less predictable variables that add color and texture to my identity as an individual within a larger Caribbean social grouping that is

defined by a shared history and experience of the world.

I wish to argue that the "tension" between the collective and the individual, the personal and the social, is given scant attention by the more radical delineations of experiential learning that have come to be associated with the practices and approaches of Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change. As a result there is a strong tendency to underestimate the role of individual preferences and aspirations that are often deeply anchored in the affective and psychological domains.

I would like to suggest that in seeking to stress the systemic nature of social inequality and the oppressive role education often plays in social formation, the practices and methodologies of village three, have become overly reliant on the adoption of "collective" and socially orientated readings of the nature and scope of experiential knowledge. Hence "conscientization", the central feature of the Freirian dialogical engagement is almost exclusively defined as a "collective" discursive practice that focuses on the critical interrogation of ideas and concepts through the appraisal of underlying ideologies. This is often defined in ways that privilege the intellectual aspects of thinking and give scant attention to the influence of the role of the affective dimension. [14]

4.1.4 Experiential Learning For Social Change - Towards a Delineation Of A Therapeutic Dimension

Although Freire (1974) defines pedagogical encounters as being passionate and emotional, in general, practitioners associated with village three have given very little attention to addressing and exploring the educational significance of the affective dimension of experience. This may be because with the exception of Doyle (1993), Taylor (1993) and McLaren (1993) very few practitioners who are associated with village three have sought to specifically explore the role of the imagination and the creative sensibilities in the promotion of "conscientization". [15] I would like to suggest that imagination and the creative sensibilities are necessary conditions for the transformative process of "conscientization". By delineating the educational role of the aesthetic dimension of experience, and pressing for its recognition as a component of apprehension, we can draw attention to the need to consider both creativity and feeling in the context of experiential learning for social change.

I believe that the already mentioned, Schooling as Ritual Performance (McLaren 1993) provides a substantial elaboration of Freirian constructs that may move us in the right direction. McLaren's (1993) ethno-methodological approach draws on explanations of human behavior that are grounded in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology.

It should also be noted that Freire also draws on the discipline of anthropology in order to develop a discursive understanding of the scope of lived experience and its role as a template of culture. [16] By focusing on the actual dynamics of the interpersonal exchanges that constitute and sustain the practice of schooling, McLaren's (1993) study provides a psycho-sociological dimension that many Freirian accounts of educational practice often lack. Hence McLaren's (1993) demonstration of the way in which a Roman Catholic school is able to use the symbols and rituals of both religion and education to control students and maintain order is an instructive account of how symbolic ritual actions operate as agents of psycho-social control that generate and maintain specific practices. [17] This designation of the body as a site of meaning and the terrain of disciplinary practices raises important epistemological considerations that are explored more fully in this study. [18]

McLaren's (1993) philosophical and theoretical elaboration of the Freirian perspective parallels and in many ways corresponds with Boal's practical extension of Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Boal's re-interpretation and consequent elaboration of Freirian practices raises two important inter-related considerations. The first of these is that we are forced to extend the parameters of Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change, to include Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques.

The second consideration is that in redefining the boundaries we must seek to interrogate and elaborate on our conceptual interpretation of the nature of experience. This highlights the larger philosophical issues that I have raised in both this and the previous chapters. [19]

Boal's (1979) initial work is educationally significant in so far as it invites us to pay attention to Dewey's (1934) philosophical analysis of art and the role of the aesthetic domain in the shaping and refining of the qualitative texture of experience. This is a key argument in this study. [20] The boundaries that separate village three from village four are in a sense the critical fault lines along which much of this discourse runs. On one hand, many practitioners who promote the social change agenda of village three forcefully reject what they see as the politically neutralizing tendencies of psychology based therapy.

While I accept the claim that the philosophical frameworks that inform the discipline of psychology may attribute far too much significance to the role of personal agency, I find it difficult to completely reject the benefits of therapeutic interventions. What is important here is the way in which we define therapeutic. Hart (1985) Salmon (1989) and Schutzman (1994) offer clear and convincing arguments for the inclusion of a therapeutic dimension in educational practices that seek to work with the social dimension of learning.

As previously indicated, Schutzman (1994) in commenting on the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices recognizes the benefits of including a therapeutic dimension within the educational components of political activism. [21] Her observations support my own position that it is possible to construct and develop a notion of therapy that runs counter to the dominant discourse of psychology based therapy. This is the primary focus of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed work that is educational and implicitly therapeutic in its approach and intention. As Boal explains:

"The Theatre of the Oppressed has three main branches - the educational, the social and the therapeutic." [22]

In many ways village three, experiential learning for social change with its emphasis on the need to recognize the structural nature of social and economic oppression is the natural home of Theatre of the Oppressed. Yet Boal's (1992) insistence on offering a therapeutic dimension to educational and activist forms of engagement forces us to recognize the ways in which Theatre of the Oppressed practices draw on and are shaped by some of the pre-occupations of Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development.

4.1.5 Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development

The final cluster of applications identified by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) is Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development. Of all the villages this is the one that has been the most strongly influenced by theories and practices developed in the areas of psychology and social psychology. The practices in village four aim to promote personal growth and development by encouraging learners to experiment with new behaviors and attitudes. The classroom or learning situation provides a safe and supportive environment for experimentation and the "working" through of problematic and emotionally charged issues. Teachers or instructors act as guides or facilitators. The work related areas of training and development have incorporated many of the principles and practices that inform this area of experiential learning.

For example, further, higher, vocational and adult education institutions in the U.K. and the U.S.A. now offer many programs that aim to improve the quality of human interaction. [23] These courses usually use theories and constructs drawn from the areas of social psychology and psychology to develop instructional programs on assertiveness, conflict resolution, time management, personal and career development and problem solving. In some instances these courses are designed and delivered as stand alone modules or as elements within a larger training and development format or area of study.

Like most of the practices that make up village four, the work of popular personal growth and development gurus like Covey (1990) and Senge (1990) is under written by values that are inspired by a humanistic philosophical perspective. Existential themes that stress the primacy of personal choice and the formative impact of "authentic" knowing are influential features of these approaches. Quite often practitioners who use experiential learning to promote personal growth and development seek to draw parallels between learning and the notion of the universal quest for enlightenment. Learning is consequently constructed either implicitly or explicitly as a metaphorical spiritual journey and the teachers, instructors or course leaders are cast in the role of facilitative guides.

The promotion of the ability to reflect on concrete experience and use this reflection as the basis for making informed choices that result in self improvement and the growth of well being is the underlying goal of the approaches and practices of Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development. The aim is to promote a holistic definition of education that consciously includes the acquisition of self knowledge, this contrasts sharply with the traditional educational goals of learning that focus on the acquisition of formal propositional knowledge. Hence the expansion and development of self knowledge is defined as the primary aim of education.

Maslow's theory of progressive "self actualization" is a key construct here that provides the basic justification for many of these implicitly optimistic assumptions about the naturally beneficial and "progressive" course of human development. It should be noted that both Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning and the models of adult learning and development put forward by Knowles, (1980) Mezirow, (1990) and Knox (1989) are all grounded in a similar understanding of the naturally "progressive" trajectory of human development.

Mezirow (1977; 1978; 1981; 1990) writes extensively on the pivotal role of critical reflection in what he refers to as transformative learning. In many ways his demands for the adoption of a critical stance by learners draws on Candy's (1981) work in the area of "perspective transformation" and corresponds with the observations Brookfield (1986) makes about the capacity of critical learners to think and act differently. Mezirow (1990) deserves particular attention, this is because he is one of the most enthusiastic promoters of learning as a transformative and personally enlightening process. His work can be seen as an extension of Kolb's (1984) assertions about the developmental role of learning and education in a modern world.

Mezirow (1990) borrows extensively from the work of Habermas who has shaped his formulations on critical and consequently emancipatory reflection. [24] Yet Mezirow, for the most part confines his promotion of "transformation through critical

consciousness" to the "intra" and interpersonal dimension of social interaction. Hence learners focus primarily on the development and acquisition of self knowledge. This contrasts sharply with Freire's (1972) recognition of the capacity of "conscientization" to promote the acquisition of forms of self-knowledge that contribute to the promotion of social change.

It is important to assert that the experiential learning applications and approaches that make up Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development, are based on the assumption that 'knowing' extends beyond the intellectual components of cognition to include the intuitive and creative dimensions of knowing. This holistic understanding of the process of coming to know rejects a separating out of the cognitive domain as an exclusively intellectual faculty concerned solely with the processing of propositional forms of knowledge. In some ways this reflects Dewey's (1933) commitment to presenting cognition as a comprehensive faculty that relies on the operational dynamics of the affective and creative dimensions apprehension.

It is the pursuit of knowledge of and about the authentic or "true self" that experiential learning practices associated with village four often seek to address and work with. For example as a result of one's personal experience of life as a single parent one can go on to question and even challenge the popular and common sense constructions that underlie the widespread

definitions of the 'normal' nuclear family model of parenting. In this instance first hand personal knowledge of the validity of alternative approaches to constructing 'family' may effectively be used to contradict the rhetoric that supports the prevailing norms.

Though it is clearly inappropriate to generalize on the basis of arbitrary and anecdotal knowledge, the strength of one's personal knowledge of single parenting may provide the starting point for a more informed rejection of the popular stereotypes of the disruptive propensity of single parent family arrangements. In this instance, knowing is grounded in the conviction of the validity of a personal experience that challenges the implicit values of the dominant narratives. In a sense it can be argued that it is the affective and emotional structures of experience that energizes the convictions that underlie this kind of self knowledge.

This contradictory tension between the way it is generally believed "things should be" and our own contrary experience of "the way things are" can generate the desire to explore and define new versions of 'truth' about ourselves and the environments in which we operate. We may be inspired to challenge the status quo by delineating an interpretation of events and situations in ways that are empowering and self affirming. Hence in this example, within the context of a group learning situation, a single mother through critical reflection

on her own experience may develop the confidence to define her own approach to parenthood as a 'good enough' alternative, to the dominant narratives of motherhood. In addition to delineating the particular strengths of her situation the single mother in question may be encouraged to identify available supportive networks and resources.

The context created by the dynamics of group learning is particularly important here as the promotion of this variant of "critical reflection" often requires in-depth exploration, discussion and the supportive participation of fellow learners. [25] The role of the facilitator is also a significant factor that may influence the specific reflective practices that are used to encourage the exploration of meaning. (Boud, Keogh and Walker 1985). Many practitioners who draw on approaches that are associated with village four, use Gestalt and psycho-dynamic techniques to promote the development of self knowledge.

As previously explained, Salmon (1989) describes how the use of drama and the creative expressive arts as instructive mediums promoted forms of critical reflection on experience that led to regenerative and self affirming learning among a group of inner city young women who were engaged in a post-secondary personal enrichment program. Salmon's (1989) comments and conclusions about the importance of nurturing women's authentic voices are supported by Loughlin and Mott's (1992) observation

of the ways in which women's acquisition of self knowledge can contribute to the emergence of a sense of themselves as social beings. [26]

As previously mentioned, the work of Heron (1993) and Mulligan (1993) can be clearly located within the parameters of Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development. Both theorists are good examples of adult and continuing education practitioner/theorists who have sought to draw attention to the significance of the creative and affective dimensions in promotion of learning. Most importantly they have highlighted the inter-dependence of these connected faculties.

Heron's (1993) work is the most elaborate example of theorizing in this area. In refusing to privilege propositional knowledge and positivist understandings of knowing, Heron's (1993) work offers a model of experiential knowledge that simultaneously operates at the physical, affective, imaginal and conceptual levels. By presenting these as hierarchically related dimensions that determine and influence the nature and scope of human action, Heron's (1993) model suggests a range of ways of working with experience that are effectively educational. It is against this background that Heron (1993) supports the use of the creative expressive arts as facilitative mediums. According to Heron (1993) activities like drama, art, guided meditations and image based activities are effective instructional mediums that address the imaginal dimension of apprehension.

In his examination of the key features that contribute to the dynamics involved in the process of learning, Mulligan (1993) identifies willing, imagining, sensing, feeling, reasoning and intuiting. He argues that the significance of imagining is often underrated and like Dewey (1938) he maintains that if we imagine something we are more likely to remember it. For Mulligan (1993) the terrain of the 'as if' conditions generated by creative engagement can provide a forum for the experimental activity of trying and re-trying. In many ways this is an important elaboration of the central principles of experiential approaches and methodologies, as it directly offers a way of expanding the scope of prevailing practices by promoting the significance of explicitly working with the aesthetic domain in the context of experiential learning.

It is not difficult to establish a practice based connection that links the approaches and practices of village four to the way in which Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices works with experience. Of course, the primary medium of expression and communication for Theatre of the Oppressed is drama, particularly the discursive medium of "image theatre". This explicit invocation of the 'as if' dimension within which the expressive creative arts operates is the primarily "aesthetic" context of Boal's work. [27]

Although Theatre of the Oppressed techniques have grown directly out of the historical and political context of Village Three, Experiential Learning For Social Change, they can be seen as being closely affiliated to Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development. I would like to suggest that on the basis of the preceding discussion adult and continuing education practitioners need to pay particular attention to the body of work that constitutes Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. In addition to their developmental and practical linkage with established experiential learning approaches and practices, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques invite us to extend our understanding of experience to include a consideration of the role and the educational contribution of the aesthetic dimension.

It should be noted that the methodological aim of this study is the emergence of this kind of synthesis. By combining the radical and activist political orientation of Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change with the personal and therapeutic focus of Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development. Theatre of the Oppressed provides an instructive framework for making sense of experiential learning and its educational implications.

4.2 Evaluating The Descriptive Typology - A Note of Caution

In reviewing the four villages put forward by Warner Weil and McGill (1989), it should be noted that these clusters or areas are not clearly distinguishable, separate or air tight categorizations. As Warner Weil and McGill (1989) stress it is counter productive to practice exclusively within the confines of a single village. In order to develop a thorough understanding of experiential learning, its practices, approaches and related methodologies we need to regard the constellation of villages provided by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) as a topographical map that provides a broad indication and outline of the terrain of experiential learning and a basis for further discussion and analysis.

There is a substantial level of fluidity, movement and overlap among these frameworks. In some instances the villages share common philosophical and theoretical backgrounds and this has resulted in the replication and sharing of practices. For example, Village Two, Experiential Learning and Post-school Education and Training and Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development, share a broad range of techniques, approaches and methodologies. In addition to drawing on Kolb's (1984) reflective model they both use auto-biographical knowledge as a framework for reflecting on and exploring human action and its significance for learning.

Although Village One, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning and Experiential Learning and Village Two, Post-school Education and Training, are developmental in their outlook and approach, they are primarily geared to meet the accreditation criteria set out by the institutions with which they may be associated. In the case of APEL, the primary objective is the recognition of relevant past experience and its translation into competencies that meet established institutional standards. Similarly, despite its commitment to the holistic development of students and learners, the primary commitment of Experiential Learning and Post-school Education and Training is the attainment of curriculum based objectives that are grounded in specific disciplines and subject areas.

In sharp contrast to the preceding observations, the main focus of villages three and four, Experiential Learning for Social Development and Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development, is on development. Of course, it is quite easy to see how the adoption of an eclectic approach to educational provision and curriculum design can result in the incorporation of strands that are drawn from the full range of available approaches. For example, in designing an institutionally based adult and continuing education program one can appropriate approaches, methods and techniques that are traditionally associated with each of the four villages.

In this case, APEL practices may be used to encourage the enrollment of students who would normally be unable to meet traditional admission criteria. In order to meet the needs, of these more than likely, mature students, who may represent the majority of the student population, the curriculum may rely extensively on the practical and interactive instructional methodologies that are associated with the democratic and participative ideals of Village Two, Experiential Learning and Development in Post-school Education and Training. Kolb's facilitative model, village two's most popular and well established approach to instruction, may be used to guide the conduct of self directed learning projects that encourage learning through reflection on experience. In addition, practicums may be used to give students the opportunity to obtain 'hands on' experience.

Depending on the scope and nature of the program it may be grounded in an ethical commitment to equality of opportunity, principles that are derived from the philosophical perspective that shapes Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change. Learners would be encouraged to adopt Freire's model of 'dialogue' as a guide for the conduct of group learning. Finally in order to help learners explore their emotional and creative responses to the experience of learning, the program may make use of the 'Gestalt' and therapy related practices and techniques that are associated with Village Four, Personal Development and Growth.

This elaborate hypothetical example illustrates the already highlighted difficulty of conceptualizing Warner Weil and McGill's (1989) villages as clearly defined and mutually exclusive categories. At a practical level the above outlined example suggests that the villages taken as a whole offer an eclectic range of complimentary methodologies and techniques. At a more conceptual level, there is a recognizable distinction between the contextual constraints of villages one and two and the more open and flexible modes of villages three and four.

As indicated in the preceding discussion, taken together, Experiential Learning for Social Change and Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development raise important political and ultimately ideological questions. These villages raise questions that move us beyond the more straightforward discussions about methodologies and practices. An examination of village three and four brings to the fore the ongoing debate about the nature of education and its social and political role. Hence Experiential Learning for Social Change and Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development are more than a collection of methods and techniques, rather they can be seen as a range of instructional and facilitative practices that are grounded in specific philosophical and theoretical perspectives.

It may be that Jackson and MacIsaac's (1994) attempts to develop a new approach to defining and talking about experiential learning provide a useful starting point for talking about and making sense of experiential learning. In theorizing experiential learning they have sought to move away from a descriptive account of practices. Instead they have developed a discursive framework that facilitates the identification of the generic features of experiential learning. On this basis, they have identified and delineated what they define as the Conceptual Foundations of Experiential Learning.

Whilst the foundational implication of Jackson and MacIsaac's model may be problematic in the sense that it may be seen to suggest the existence of an irreducible essence, none the less their model can be seen as a descriptive schema. [28] In addition to encouraging the identification of a cluster of specific generic features of experiential learning, the model surfaces the conceptual dimensions of the area. This can shift us away from more superficial and somewhat arbitrary descriptive delineations of theories and practices.

4.3 Commentary: Working With Experience - An Account of An Innovative Approach To Training Needs Analysis

Many organization wide training and development initiatives are often preceded by fairly elaborate and comprehensive needs assessment and evaluation exercises that aim to ascertain the level, nature and scope of training input that is required. The following example of practice is in some respects atypical from a theoretical perspective. Yet it does provide an interesting example of the way in which a primarily "experiential" approach was used as a mode of inquiry in order to circumvent the political and bureaucratic restraints that often hamper the administration of established approaches to assessing and defining training and development needs.

Approximately one year ago, I was approached by a client and asked to establish and run an organization wide training program for a commercial pharmaceutical distribution company that operates its own retail outlets. This meant that there was a considerable level of public inter-face as the company runs more than four retail outlets and controls the sole distributorship for most of the pharmaceutical products used by the jurisdiction's sixty thousand residents. While the brief was relatively straightforward: concentrate on the most visible customer relations interfaces, the organization's history of training and development required the adoption of a somewhat cautious and maybe even unorthodox approach.

Firstly, there were the very present and tightly defined parameters imposed by financial and resource related considerations. In addition, the new Human Resource Manager, who had initially approached me, clearly conveyed her concerns about developing the program in the face what she felt was a wide spread and overwhelmingly cynical perception of the training and development function and its capacity to achieve visible results. Against this background, we both agreed that conventional needs assessment approaches that involved standard data collection procedures would more than likely increase the prevailing level of cynicism and inadequately deploy the already limited level of available resources.

Faced with this dilemma we decided after a prolonged period of discussion that included a review of anecdotal and administrative data that we should take the "plunge" and get started. We decided to design, organize and run a series of two to three hour workshops that sought to introduce and demonstrate a more "progressive" approach to training and development. It was on this basis that we put together a workshop format that required frontline staff to identify and explore their own perceptions of their work, and their relationship with the company and its customers. This, we felt, would provide the basis for comparing their perceptions with those formally defined by the organization and espoused by management.

We believed that this approach would enable us to discuss and explore areas like customer service practices, levels of job satisfaction and interest and individual perceptions of the role of front line staff and their level of competence. The approach, was "experiential" in so far as the exercises and the related activities were designed and structured in ways that asked front line staff to draw on their day to day knowledge and experience of work. Hence the workshop program relied on mainly interactive learning exercises similar to those explored in this study.

The workshop also sought to draw attention to models of good practice that could serve as informal evaluative benchmarks against which learners could generally assess their current levels of performance. Our own expectation was that the program would be run across the organization, starting with the frontline staff and progressing horizontally and then vertically through the organization. With the benefit of the critical and reflective gaze of hindsight this was clearly an ill-conceived approach as we had failed to provide the opportunity for line managers to give input and acquire a sense of ownership of the training initiative.

Of course, as is inevitable in such situations, news of our activities soon spread, generating vague interest, cynicism and in some cases outright suspicion and hostility. Our growing concern about the long term interest of the program prompted us to adopt a pro-active response.

We immediately opened up the planning process by asking managers to serve as "stand ins" for the early "dummy runs" of the already designed programs. We emphasized the importance of testing and the significance of their input at the early stages.

The results of this decisive, unplanned response to the earliest signs of resistance in the organization were and continue to be both surprising and rewarding. By asking and obtaining the agreement of managers to "experience" the workshop from the perspective of front line staff, we were in a sense, playfully "joking" the roles of frontline staff. Managers were provided with the opportunity to think about and become aware of the immediate context of the work of the front line staff. We hoped that this would enable managers to begin to understand the perspective and perceptions of frontline staff. At the same time they could acknowledge and reflect on their spheres of influence as managers and role models.

Neither the time nor the conditions under which these workshops were conducted provided the opportunity for engaging in elaborate or extended role plays or simulations. Rather we were able to elicit managers' perceptions of employees' perceptions. Surprisingly, this turned out to be far more fruitful than we had ever anticipated. The workshops have generated substantial levels of information and increased our awareness of the important issues within the organization.

At this stage of what is an ongoing exercise, we have already developed a standardized training program for frontline staff.

The workshop format enables us to pose questions and explore issues while drawing on participants' knowledge of themselves and the work they do. This is an appropriate background for developing communication, team building and conflict management skills. Although we are at the early stages of this initiative the results are reasonably impressive.

This brief case study outline touches on a number of the issues explored in the preceding section of this study. In the constantly shifting terrain of actual practice, we are often forced to work with a broad understanding of experiential learning practices and approaches. As this example demonstrates, although one may have been working within the parameters of Village Two, Experiential Learning for Post-school Education and Training there was a need to move beyond the confines of those boundaries and to develop perspectives that are often associated with the other villages.

Hence in working with the frontline staff, it was important to establish "dialogue" as a primary mode of communication capable of fostering the kind of honesty and "openness" required for effective facilitation of reflective practices. This democratic approach to fostering learning is often associated with Freirian approaches to pedagogy that are usually seen as the central

component of experiential learning practices that are related to Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change.

In addition, activities like role playing and the deployment facilitative activities that work explicitly with the affective and psycho-social domain of experience signal a connection with the developmental orientation of Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development. The exigencies of practice requires the improvisation of movements across boundaries by adult and continuing education practitioners in order to address the immediate and sometimes unpredictable needs of learners and the situations they are in.

Yet we cannot overlook the ways in which the various meanings and understandings of experiential learning reflect the existence of a certain tension among the various "villages" and their related perspectives. As this study explains at length, the context within which the practices of experiential learning are located is often defined by very specific understandings of the scope and nature of education and its role. From the practical and instrumental emphasis of Village One, Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning to the clearly more idealistic aspirations of Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change, there are distinctions in the way in which the role, scope and uses of education are defined.

I would like to suggest that the preceding case study indicates that as practitioners in the area of adult and continuing education it is counter-productive to locate oneself exclusively in a single village, to the exclusion of all others. Practitioners in the area of adult and continuing education must demonstrate a capacity to shift among the various available perspectives without losing sight of a broad vision of education as a multi-dimensional terrain. This is the focus of this study, to work with and among the existing boundaries, their related perspectives and tensions. This is the challenge of education.

CHAPTER 5

Experiential Learning - Towards A Conceptual Framework

5.1 Experiential Learning - A Consideration Of The Conceptual Dimensions

In order to facilitate a rethinking of the area of experiential learning Jackson and MacIsaac (1994) delineate what they refer to as the Conceptual Foundations of Experiential Learning, a four dimensional component of a larger "Updated Experiential Learning Process Model". [1] The four conceptual dimensions put forward by Jackson and MacIsaac (1994) are: a definition of knowledge; elements of cognition; constructivist teaching practices and reflective practices. These dimensions encourages us to look beyond surface descriptions of techniques and methodologies and to recognize the generic features of experiential learning practice. These generic features define the conceptual parameters of experiential learning and provide the dimensions along which to develop the interpretative focus of this study. [2]

Consequently, in this chapter we need to ask how do Warner Weil and McGill's (1998) four villages define knowledge, interpret cognition, practice constructivist teaching and facilitate reflection? As previously indicated, an exploration of these questions will enable this study to move beyond descriptive readings of the nature and scope of experiential learning and towards the development and elaboration of a conceptual understanding of the area. This will facilitate the development of the interpretative focus that defines the scope of this study.

5.1.1 Defining Experiential Knowledge In The Context Of Experiential Learning.

Experiential learning theorists like Dewey (1938), Kolb (1984) and Heron (1993) draw attention to the importance of making clear the epistemological assumptions that inform progressive teaching practices and consequently set them apart from more traditional practices. The ways in which both practitioners and learners think about and value different forms of knowledge determines the focus and to some extent the outcome of the learning and teaching transactions that take place. The preceding argument is supported by Cunningham and Fitzgerald (1996) who assert that all educational practices are grounded in epistemological assumptions as education raises questions about what counts as knowledge? where is knowledge located? how can we go about increasing knowledge? The conflicting delineations of the nature, scope and role of knowledge lie at the heart of most contemporary debates about educational approaches and practices.

At all levels of educational practice we encounter competing ways of thinking about the nature of knowledge. Multiculturalism is an example of a single arena within which contemporary epistemological struggles are waged. Glazer (1997) defines the struggles over the multicultural curriculum as part of a broader liberal-conservative tension that is fundamentally about citizenship and the scope and nature of knowledge.

The practices used to promote experiential learning have not escaped somewhat similar controversial epistemological scrutiny.

For adult education practitioners this must be seen as part of a larger problem. Jarvis (1995) draws our attention to the failure of many experiential learning theorists to adequately ground their propositions about the nature of experience in substantive epistemological and consequently philosophical frameworks. [3] Both Bright, (1989) and Usher and Bryant (1989) surface the limitations of popular interpretations of the nature of experience. A milder critical tone is reflected in the concerns expressed by both Boud (1989) and Brookfield (1993) who challenge what they see as the pervasive and distorting influence of the romantic components of the progressive liberal agenda. They assert that overly idealistic and somewhat utopian aspirations have been incorporated by many adult education practitioners who have adopted experiential learning practices.

In many ways it can be argued that it is the exponential growth of experiential learning theorizing and practice that has substantially contributed to the emergence of some of these problems. It is instructive to note that up until Freire's (1972) unusual blending of neo-marxist, Hegelian and radical Christian principles within a distinctively constructivist framework, Dewey's progressive interpretation of the nature of experience and its educational usefulness was the major contributor to the development of experiential learning theories.

Lewin, (1951) Piaget, (1972) Vygotsky, (Cole et al 1978) Polanyi (1973) and Jung (1977) influenced Kolb's (1984) eclectic integration of philosophy and developmental and social psychology. [4] It is against this background that a clear distinction is often made between experiential knowing and other types of knowing. Traditional concepts of valid knowledge as being mainly theoretical and communicated by directive instructional methodologies are often set against informal, experiential modes of knowing gained by reflecting on or mulling over experience. The elevation of book based, documented, theoretical knowledge to being above and better than informal personal knowing can be directly related to the high status that is traditionally accorded the empirical "scientific" positivist model of objective knowledge.

Experiential learning practitioners are increasingly being drawn to conceptualizations of knowledge that acknowledge the value of personal experience, the ways in which social context defines meaning and the consequent political nature of epistemological discourses. Hence some areas of experiential learning theorizing have sought to develop alternative readings of the nature and scope of experience and its educational implications. [5]

The radical focus of these dissenting epistemologies has drawn extensively on Freire's (1972) delineation of learners as active "subjects" rather than passive "objects".[6]

For groups and individuals who have been marginalised by the racist and sexist implications of dominant discourses, these alternative interpretations of the nature and scope of knowledge provide the opportunity to voice and explore alternative accounts of their own social and cultural histories.

It is clear that most practices cited within the four "villages" of experiential learning (Warner Weil and Mc Gill, 1989) are grounded in definitions of knowledge that elevate the status of "experience" and put forward its validity as a source of reliable and worthwhile knowledge. Yet these areas of practice reveal prevailing epistemological tensions and contradictions. For example, as previously indicated, in the context of APEL, prior experience is recognized as valid source of learning even though this acknowledgment is somewhat neutralized. Institutional agendas actually determine the conditions under which the experiences of learners are recognised as valid forms of knowledge for assessment and accreditation. [7] In the case of practices associated with Village Two, Experiential Learning and Post-school Education and Training, traditional understandings of "good" knowledge often remain intact as experiential knowledge is perceived as being of secondary importance. [8]

In order to draw attention to the educational value of experience and its capacity to serve as a reliable source of knowing Anne Weaver Hart, (1990) suggests the simple, although somewhat

problematic approach of considering three kinds of knowledge. These are theoretical knowledge, empirical knowledge and experiential knowledge. This approach to thinking about knowledge is particularly useful for this study, as it provides a framework for making sense of experiential learning practices and their educational implications. [9]

Anne Weaver Hart (1990) explains that theoretical knowledge refers to a general, abstract body of explanations that seeks to define an area like an art or science, empirical knowledge seeks to confirm or disconfirm on basis of evidence acquired through the conduct of organized study and observation. Finally, experiential knowledge draws directly on ones experience and the experience of others. Its benefits are clearly its vividness, immediacy and relevance. Frequently, theoretical and empirical forms of knowledge lack this vividness and immediacy. Anne Weaver Hart (1990) goes on to assert that the most obvious disadvantage of experiential knowledge is that taken on its own it is unrepresentative, simplistic and limited.

Dewey's scientific approach to working with experience, aims to incorporate rather than separate out theoretical and empirical forms of knowledge, capturing the vividness and immediacy of experiential knowledge and reducing its unreliability. For example, a detailed theoretical knowledge of the processes involved in preparing a specific special dish or food is no

substitute for the actual 'doing'. We may "know" all about the precise measurements required and the chemical significance of the cooking process. Yet there is nothing like engaging in the actual process of cooking or preparation. The qualitative immediacy of the smells, taste, the textures and sounds are vivid and important touchpoints that shape our knowing and anchor our knowledge in the sensibilities.

Although the establishment of clear distinctions between empirical, theoretical and experiential forms of knowing is useful, it is also problematic. I wish to argue that while setting experiential knowledge alongside theoretical and empirical knowledge may simplify and address the problem of delineation and categorization, we can be implicitly setting these "alternative" forms of knowledge against each other. Here comparative "framing" can prevent us from developing an understanding and appreciation of the "integrative" function of experiential knowledge and its ability to act as a catalyst that facilitates the way we interpret and "make sense" of theoretical and empirical knowledge.

This observation is one of Dewey's principle formulations on the role and scope of experience. Hence while Anne Weaver Hart's (1990) distinctions are useful, by framing 'experiential' knowledge as the least reliable of the three options, traditional assumptions about the certainty and validity of empirical and theoretical knowledge remain unchallenged.

I would like to further suggest that there are differing approaches to interpreting experience and to consequently defining experiential knowledge. This is reflected in the varying ways in which Warner Weil and Mc Gill's (1989) four villages work with experiential knowledge and implicitly endorse its validity. [10]

Dewey (1938) draws attention to the need for "progressive" approaches to education to be grounded in corresponding theories and interpretations of the nature of knowledge. This is supported in many ways by the work of both Kolb (1984) and Heron (1993) whose educational contribution on the role of subjectivist knowing and self knowledge challenges the privileging of objectivist and positivist understandings of knowledge. Kolb (1984) in outlining his experiential learning theory, or more accurately his delineation of reflective practice, provides an account of the ways in which the scope and nature of knowledge and inquiry have evolved over time and demonstrate the impact of social, technological and political development. [11]

In addition to promoting a clear understanding of experiential knowledge and its role in the facilitation of experiential learning practices we need to also focus on the multi-dimensional nature of experiential knowledge. Although Kolb (1984) makes a clear and important distinction between the processes of apprehension and comprehension and suggests that the imaginal

and creative processes connect these functions, he does not give adequate emphasis to the interactive nature of these components of thinking. It can be argued that the extent to which we are able to shift from apprehension to thinking is determined by our capacity to creatively engage with what we are learning and to imagine it to be so. This approach to understanding and making sense of the process of learning attributes a central role to the aesthetic dimension and simultaneously anchors the process of learning firmly in experience.

A consideration of experiential knowledge in this context becomes more than the immediate activities and actions that we engage in and extends to include all the possible ranges of action we are capable of imagining or thinking of. This expanded definition of experience and consequently experiential knowledge reaches far beyond Kolb's (1984) comparatively limited epistemological framework. Although Dewey relied on a scientific model of inquiry his understanding of experience sought to make sense of the aesthetic domain of experience, making it an integral part of thinking and learning. Against this background it is clear Theatre of the Oppressed with its explicit reliance on the aesthetic domain works with experience in a very particular way.

5.1.2 A Consideration of Cognition In The Context of Experiential Learning

The second dimension of Jackson and MacIsaac's (1994) Conceptual Framework of Experiential Learning is Elements of Cognition. This refers to the ways in which experiential methodologies incorporate and work with the processes that facilitate understanding, comprehension and learning. According to Jackson and MacIsaac (1994) prior experience and situated cognition are the elements of cognition relied on by experiential approaches to the facilitation of learning. Prior experience defines the level, scope and nature of the accumulated past learning that learners bring to each new learning experience. Situated cognition refers to the extent to which experiential learning methods and techniques place learners in environments that correspond with the context in which what is being learned will be applied.

In many ways the experiential learning approaches and practices outlined by Warner Weil and McGill (1989) rely on varying combinations of prior learning and situated cognition. In the case of village one, APEL focuses almost exclusively on quantifying and evaluating prior experience. Of the four villages under review, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development offers the most elaborate and in many ways the most distinctive elaboration of cognition. Both prior experience and situated cognition are drawn upon in equal measure. While the ability to recall events is an important starting point for

many of the practices and methodologies in this area, the provision of the opportunity to learn by experimenting with alternative actions and attitudes is of equal importance. It is therefore not surprising that the action science practices developed and pioneered by Argyris and Schon (1974) make extensive use of role plays in their case studies. [12]

As previously indicated Salmon (1989) in defining experiential learning as a medium for personal development supports the use of role plays as effective forms of engagement that promote cognition by encouraging learners to delineate the nature of their "stance" on the issues under review. In a way Salmon (1989) is working with an understanding of cognition that goes beyond everyday assumptions that privilege abstract intellectual knowing. [13] Salmon's (1989) use of role plays relies on both prior experience and situated cognition. For example, in the context of a racism awareness course, participants may be asked to recall a specific incident in which they were unfairly discriminated against and failed to respond in a way that they found satisfactory.

A demonstration of one's "stance" or relatedness to the particular issues under review can involve the enactment, and consequently replaying of the incident in the safety of the training room. Learners can demonstrate and work with knowledge drawn from their prior experience of social relations.

At the same time their replication of the incident can enable them to experience a "situated" mode of cognition that draws on a broad range of qualitative cues. It can be argued that role plays provide the opportunity for multi-dimensional experiencing. In the case of this particular example other people on the training course may join in, taking on different roles, developing their own responses and exploring their feeling about the issue of discrimination. [14] It can be argued that role plays are less emotionally charged than Theatre of the Oppressed practices that are structured around the frustration of the protagonist "will". [15]

Many accounts of experiential learning emphasize the holistic nature of cognition and encourage us to turn away from relatively narrow definitions that stress and to some extent over emphasize its intellectual aspects. Hence in many ways the theories and practices of experiential learning encourage us to think about cognition as a multi-faceted process that incorporates a broad range of senses and sensory functions. An understanding of the educational significance of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques invites us to extend this conceptualization even further by recognizing the mind/body inter-connectedness of cognition.

Hence we need to see cognition as a comprehensive process that includes sensations, perceptions, representations, memory, imagination and thinking.

It is the aim of this thesis to argue that experiential learning methodologies by their very nature suggest this holistic interpretation of cognition and challenges traditional understandings that are limited by their focus on the intellectual elements of thinking. Dewey's (1933) theorizing on how we think is a major philosophical contribution that effectively extends popular perceptions of cognition by focusing on the interactive transactions between the individuals as organisms, and the environments within which they are located. By defining experience as being multi-dimensional and in correspondence with the structures of thinking we are offered an epistemology of cognition that accords equal status to the feeling, the affective and the rational abstract components of thought. In this sense, thinking and by implication cognition is treated as a holistic mode of engagement and the affective domain is seen as being significant and subject to its own logic and precision.

This final observation challenges traditional assumptions about the aesthetic qualities like the imagination and feelings that are often held as being wild and unpredictable. [16] By defining the aesthetic domain as an integral component of the larger scheme of thinking, Dewey's holistic delineation of the nature of thinking, suggests that experiential learning practices work with experience in ways that sustain a broad reading of the scope of cognition. From this perspective the feelings, the imagination and the creative sensibilities are critical determinants that shape the scope of our experiential knowledge

by determining what and how we think about our encounters with reality. As previously explained, the work of Johnson (1987) on the material basis of cognition is important here as it suggests that there is a bodily basis for knowing and experiencing. [17]

As previously indicated in Bodylore, Young, (1994) a folklorist who draws extensively on the area of anthropology, provides an example of the way in which her physical participation in ritual celebrations contributed to the expansion of her experiential knowledge about a culture and social setting that was different from her own. Her ability to interpret and make sense of the mores and customs of the social groups that were involved relied on this material level of involvement with their ritual practices.

Through the actual doing and performing involved in enactment, Young (1994) explains that she came to understand and think about the group of people she was studying differently. It is an important argument of this study that so far adult education practitioners and theorists have given very little attention to this particular elaboration of "situated" cognition. I would like to suggest that Theatre of the Oppressed brings to the fore the material dimension of cognition and its relationship with the aesthetic dimension of experience. [18] It is against this background that Boal's delineation of the instructive value of the "aesthetic space" takes on particular importance.

5.1.3 A Consideration Of Constructivist Teaching Practices In The Context Of Experiential Learning

It can be argued that all experiential learning methodologies use constructivist teaching practices to a greater or lesser extent. Candy (1981) is one of the early adult education theorists who drew attention to the significance of constructivism in the process of learning. Kelly's (1955) theory of personal constructs provides the basis of Candy's promotion of constructivism as a key element in learning. Drawing on Kelly's work Candy (1981) suggests that experiential learning practices can foster profound shifts in perception and meaning. This involves the alteration of the very constructs, or interpretive filters through which we read and make sense of the world. Candy (1977) stresses that the participative and reflective elements of experiential learning often mean that emotions are involved in this process of re-organization.

According to Candy (1981) there are two ways in which our personal construct systems adapt to new learning. Learning by construction is one response, this involves simply adding on or elaborating on existing constructions. The other way involves learning by re-construction, this is more profound and requires a fundamental re-orientation of understanding. In some cases these shifts can influence one's belief systems about the nature of the world and social reality. Candy (1981) emphasizes that the level of personal threat in these instances can be relatively high and processes are somewhat akin to psycho-therapy. [19]

As Burr (1995) in *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* indicates, the theoretical contributions of Berger and Luckmann (1966) provide an important framework for the critical examination of essentialist assumptions about the nature of social reality. Against this background the entire area of the social sciences can be seen as a discursive terrain for thinking differently about social reality and developing the kinds of practices that can promote social change.

The possibility that learning can result in the radical dis-assemblage of meaning is explored by both Rogers (1980) and Jarvis (1995). Mezirow (1990) redefines this process in the context of education as "perspective transformation" and he has developed a model of learning that explicitly aims to promote personal development. In explaining the fundamental transformation required for personal effectiveness Covey, (1990) a popular management consultant and change management "guru", borrows the concept of "paradigm shift" from Kuhn (1962). This concept of personal development is the framework within which most of the village four's practices and understandings of experiential learning are located.

Brookfield (1987) writes extensively about the role of critical thinking in this process of reconstruction and draws attention to the ways in which it is possible for adult education practitioners to encourage learners to be active participants in the facilitation of this process.

According to Brookfield (1987) critical learners should question, assess and formulate their own opinions about the validity and reliability of the information they are bombarded with on a daily basis. For example, even though one may recognize television news cast as valid sources of news about important national and international events, the adoption of a critical approach would encourage a search for editorial bias and consequent distortion.

While the literature on adult education theory and practices devotes considerable attention to the development of critical inquiry, it is clear that there are differing readings of the nature and scope of critical inquiry. For example, there is a moderately radical approach that supports an active interrogation of all ideas. (Brookfield, 1987; Knox, 1989; Knowles, 1980) On the other hand, there are the more extreme approaches that promote a rigorous delineation and interrogation of underlying epistemological assumptions. (Freire, 1972; Illich, 1980; McClaren, 1993; Giroux 1988). Experiential practices and applications associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change (Warner Weil and McGill, 1979) are specifically designed to challenge prevailing social and political arrangements.

Consequently the conduct of critical inquiry in the context of popular education, is markedly different from the conduct of critical inquiry in the context of Village Two, Experiential Learning For Post-school Education Training. The emphasis is different. For example, a grassroots activist community group using participatory research in order to make sense of the full implications of a newly devised local eco-tourism policy is likely to have an entirely different approach to the conduct of critical inquiry than a university based group of students who are considering the same issues as part of their training as policy analysts. [20]

Although both groups may draw on action inquiry methodologies in order to facilitate their ability to make sense of the key issues, the particular interests that they represent and their roles within the established political economy are very likely to determine the ways in which they engage in and conduct critical inquiry. In summary, while constructivism is an important consideration that shapes the ways in which experiential learning practices operate, the aims and the underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge differ substantively across the boundaries of the various villages. Hence the ways in which they encourage learners to engage in reflection is another important dimension that defines the conceptual framework of experiential learning.

Applications and approaches that are related to Village One, The Accreditation Of Prior Experiential Learning, rely on constructivist notions of teaching in so far as they emphasize the need to focus on the experiential knowledge of students by grounding understanding in past experience. By starting where students are at and acknowledging their past learning as valid, Paczuska (1992) was able to encourage students to develop a critical understanding of the ways in which science and technology studies have traditionally excluded women. [21] According to her account this critical perspective contributed to the empowerment of those particular women and increased the probability of their survival in what was clearly a less than supportive environment. Of course, not all APEL arrangements provide this opportunity for the practice of constructivist teaching as the demands and constraints imposed by the accrediting process may result in an institution led approach to learning from experience that fails to focus on the needs of students.

It should be noted that the significance of constructivism as a conceptual dimension of experiential learning practice can be related to a clear commitment to the recognition of education as a critical practice that questions and interrogates social reality. Underlying this is the assumption that we can facilitate and promote changes in the way in which people think, feel and behave. This corresponds with Dewey's broad understanding of the nature and scope of education.

Much of Dewey's philosophical discourse about the nature and aims of education focuses on the capacity of individuals to make informed "moral" choices by exercising their capacity to observe, reason and exercise judgment.

As indicated throughout this chapter, for Dewey the emotional and creative dimensions of apprehension are crucial sites of mediation that shape the way in which we come to know. It is therefore reasonable to assume that at a conceptual level constructivism and consequently constructivist teaching practices are central to an exploration of the way in which cognitive processes mediate and make sense of knowledge.

More importantly, Dewey defines education as a mode of inquiry that is set in motion by our encounter with dis-equilibrium or the feeling that something is not quite right. It is the "feeling" that something is not quite right that energizes the mode of inquiry that is the central component of the reflective deliberation that underpins Dewey's radical epistemology.

I wish to suggest that a consideration of Dewey's identification of the importance of imaginal and emotional elements of experience can add a crucial conceptual component to our understanding of experiential knowledge and experiential learning. Dewey (1938) explains that the best way to act effectively is to imagine effectively. This observation draws attention to the dramatic and aesthetic elements that underpins

Candy's (1981) previously mentioned representation of construction and re-construction in the context of learning.

In identifying "dramatic rehearsal" as part of the broader activity of deliberation, Dewey explains that the critical thinking through of problems and perplexing circumstances, requires the mental re-enactment of imaginative "what if" scenarios. This entails a creative and playful conjuring up and projection of the alternative consequences of the various courses of action we may choose. In instances when we are faced with moral dilemmas, this imaginative movement between the projected outcomes of the available choices can be seen as a kind of "moral artistry" that relies on our capacity to deploy our critical sensibilities.

In the context of education this "moral artistry" may involve the critical re-assemblage of common sense and popular understandings of social reality. In raising "moral" and "ethical" questions about the way things are and creatively re-imagining the way things could or should be, we are effectively drawing on a "constructivist" approach to making sense of social reality. This understanding is grounded in an acknowledgment of the capacity of human action to bring about social and political forms of change. [22] Consequently, it is important that constructivist teaching practices acknowledge the critical role of the imagination and the related educational significance of the aesthetic domain of experience.

5.1.4. A Consideration Of Reflective Practice Within The Context Of Experiential Learning

The final dimension of the Jackson and McIsaac's (1994) Conceptual Foundation of Experiential Learning is reflective practice. Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1995) and Nodding and Miller (1997) are editors of two collections of diverse accounts of reflective practices, while Mulligan (1993) and Heron (1993) offer important frameworks that address the scope and nature of the reflective processes that underpin experiential learning. [22] Kemmis (1985) uses the work of Habermas to delineate the capacity of learners to critically interrogate knowledge through the conduct of reflection. He demonstrates that the reflective interrogation of experience can involve different levels of complexity. Hence he identifies practical, technical and emancipatory forms of reflection. The first two are problem solving orientations to reflection that draw on every day and common sense constructions of knowledge. The third and final form, emancipatory reflection, he explains as being critical in its intent and drawing on critical considerations of broader moral, ethical and implicitly political issues of social justice and equality.

I wish to argue here that the reflective practices deployed by each of the four villages reviewed in this study rely extensively on the self-conscious and deliberate re-presentation of experience in a variety of forms and modes.

From this perspective, reflective practices aim to promote an awareness of the self as a critical learner capable of managing the process of learning. The re-presentation of experience is a pre-requisite of the reflective and deliberative modes of inquiry that underpin experiential learning practices. Hence both the content and form of re-presentation are critical considerations.

For example, APEL students are required to effectively chronicle and re-present their prior experience in ways that can be read and evaluated by accrediting institutions. In the case of Village Two, Experiential Learning And Post Compulsory-school, Education and Training, the performance of practicums or work experience internships requires the production of supporting documentation. The re-presentation of experience may take various forms from diaries to verbal feedback or collective or individual report writing.

In the case of Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change, the collective representation of experience emerges out of forms of dialogue that aim to demonstrate the educational implications of teaching practices that are committed to democratic ideals. The literacy program Freire (1972) describes uses pictures of the key items used by the community in their day-to-day lives.

These pictures are used as starting points for discussion. This visual re-presentation of social reality invites the learners to develop a critical understanding of their relationship with these items.

In the case of Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth Development, the re-presentation of experience often relies on reflective practices associated with areas like psycho-therapy and more recently drama therapy. Hence, role plays, Gestalt type group work or complex simulations are often used to re-frame and consequently re-present experience in ways that promote learning. In the article "Animating Learning in Teams: A Gestalt Approach", Harris (1996) provides an instructive account of the use of Gestalt practices in the context of training. In a management development training program an organizational problem may be represented in the form of a human sculpture, a configuration that relies on the creative assemblage of the material bodies of participants. [23]

A key consideration for this study is the way in which the re-presentation of experience relies on a reflexive interrogation of memory. I would like to suggest that the ways in which reflective practices interrogate memory and re-present events differs across the boundaries of experiential practice. These differences are very important.

It can be concluded that the contours of the reflective practice themselves define the scope and nature of the experiential knowledge that is generated.

Hence the reflective practices associated with APEL and Experiential Learning for Post-school Education and Training shape the way in which experience is re-presented and reflected on. For example, reports and case studies rely on primarily linear structures of presentation. This linearity effectively structures the manner in which experience is reported and evaluated. There are a number of examples of reflective practices that illustrate this observation. By drawing our attention to the way in which the keeping of a journal can effectively record and track the process of learning, Walker (1985) demonstrates the capacity of free style journal writing to offer a non-linear approach to the framing and re-presentation of experience. Hence a reflective journal can foster the reflexive and self conscious exploration of memory and a related radical mapping and understanding of events and situations.

This understanding of reflection as a way of working with memory is supported by Brew's (1993) previously cited account of her struggle to make sense of a personal crisis. Her example relates reflective practices associated with experiential learning to the non-linear, fragmented and emotionally grounded nature of the way memory works.

From this perspective, reflective work with memory in the context of experiential learning can be seen as including a substantial creative component that is related to the capacity of the imagination to rework experience. [24]

Hence in response to a particularly perplexing and frustrating problem, memory can help us to make unusual and unexpected connections that can lead to innovative configurations of meaning. Here memory serves as an aide-memoir that sustains the complex re-constructive process that sets deliberative reflection apart from our ordinary and day to day transactions with the environment. If we argue that reflective practices, are in essence, the processes and approaches that are used in the context of experiential learning to retrieve and re-present memory, we can go on to posit that the very processes and forms of retrieval are as important as the content or products.

It is important to note that McLaren and Tadeu da Silva (1993) in the article Decentering Pedagogy, Critical Resistance and the Politics of Memory, relate Foucault's interpretation of counter-memory to Freirian practices of pedagogy. They explain that the alternative accounts of social reality that emerge out of the critical interrogation of the lived experiences of those who are oppressed can serve as important alternative narratives that demonstrate the radical and oppositional features of counter-memory.

This means that learners can develop alternative readings of situations that seek to define social reality beyond the boundaries of what Foucault defines as the dominant "regimes of truth". These insights emerge out of the creative interrogation of social reality. For example, the group of managers who participated in the previously described "sculpting" activity that sought to re-present their interpretation of a commonly experienced problem may, in the process of a creative re-presentation of their perception of reality, come to apprehend the situation differently. [25]

For this study this is a key consideration, as in many ways Theatre of the Oppressed can be defined as a distinctive reflective practice that seeks to subvert and challenge normal approaches to thinking about and working with memory in order to promote critical reflection and transformative learning. By relying on drama as a medium of communication and using the discursive language of "image theatre", Theatre of the Oppressed works with memory to foster the emergence of radical modes of counter memory. This can be seen as an elaboration of established experiential reflective practices. More importantly, it draws attention to the capacity of the dramatic arts to work with the aesthetic dimension of experience in ways that are instructional and ultimately educational. [26]

5.2 Towards An Interpretative Framework - A Note On Methodology

The preceding account of the conceptual parameters of experiential learning is a fruitful contribution. In addition to moving the inquiry forwards, the emergence of this primarily interpretative focus shifts the reflective parameters of the study beyond the boundaries of a descriptive delineation of experiential learning.

[26] This movement away from the descriptive, critical and evaluative limits within which discourses about experiential learning are often framed, brings to the fore an approach to making and sign-posting meaning that is particular to this study.

[27] The aim is to shift away from everyday and common sense readings of what things are and to effectively develop an interpretative focus that increases understanding by re-framing and consequently illuminating meaning.

As previously indicated, one of the important contributions of this study is a demonstration of the epistemological benefits of developing an analytical framework that promotes "interpretive illumination". Here I am promoting a discursive movement beyond the immediate terms of the area that we are seeking to understand. I am suggesting that a stepping away from the obvious and immediate reading of meaning can in turn facilitate a projective enlightenment. This requires a figurative screening of meaning, a projection onto a context other than that from which what we are examining has emerged. Hence in exploring the scope and nature of the Theatre Of The Oppressed system of practices within the context of experiential learning, we are

effectively projecting this model of theatre onto the illuminative screen of education.

I am not arguing here for a completely decontextualized reading of meaning or for an essentialist pursuit of core or a priori truths. Rather, I am conceptually suggesting that "projection" and "screening" are playful metaphors that convey the nature of the interpretative approach that underpins and defines the scope of this study. The metaphors of projection and screening resonate at a number of levels, defining a continuous link that connects and relates the various components of the study. By shifting away from descriptive accounts of experiential learning and teasing out the broad generic features, the preceding section of this study projects out as it were the conceptual parameters of experiential learning.

This conceptual delineation of the nature and scope of experiential learning shapes and defines the discursive parameters within which we can examine the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. From this perspective, the conceptual delineation of experiential learning re-frames and effectively provides a "screen" for the projective focus defined by the key educational themes raised by The Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. [29] Consequently, we are able to explore the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension within which Theatre of the Oppressed operates.

In locating thinking within the context of experience, Dewey (1933) explains the illuminative role of what he refers to as the background structures of experience. He explores the capacity of the creative sensibilities to playfully project meaning across the boundaries that delineate the affective and the intellectual domains of knowing. [30] This corresponds with the way in which 'image theatre' is used as the screen onto which experience is re-presented through the illuminative qualities of what Boal refers to as the "aesthetic space". [31]

We can relate all these examples to the way in which artistic modes of expression serve as interpretative frames that convey and transmit knowledge in a form that is distinctive and special. The painter, the actor and the musician use the creative media of expression like art, drama and music in order to convey meanings that are primarily projective in the sense that they move beyond the immediate and literal to the symbolic. In this way the canvas, the stage and the musical instrument serve as vast screens onto which meaning is projected. Artistic modes of expression are illuminative in so far as they rely on symbolic modes of re-presentation that communicate specific meanings. These observations are an important frame of reference for this study. In summary, the interpretive practice of "illuminative projection" corresponds with the way in which the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices re-presents experience in the illuminative context of improvisational drama and effectively re-frames our understandings of the scope of social agency.

CHAPTER 6

Theatre of the Oppressed - A Descriptive Overview

6.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed - Towards A Descriptive Overview

At their simplest level the Theatre of the Oppressed methodologies are interactive and participative approaches to the exploration and resolution of personal and social problems. Practitioners in the areas of social psychology, therapy, anthropology, community development and community education have been attracted to Boal's work and have been trained and are themselves training others as Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners. (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz 1994) In many instances these converts to the methodology have sought to make sense of the techniques while simultaneously promoting their efficacy.

As previously mentioned, it is the purpose of this thesis to explore Boal's innovative re-formulation of popular education in the context of theatre and to consequently demonstrate its pedagogical focus. The aesthetic basis of 'image theatre' and its reliance on kinesthetic modes of expression and communication encourages us to look beyond our narrow and common sense understandings of "experience" and experiential learning. Although a number of theatre for development practitioners have used Boal's work extensively, these applications have often been shaped by perspectives located within the areas of popular developmental theatre, the arts and communications. (Kerr 1995; Mda 1993; Epskamp 1989) [1] While these are instructive frameworks, there is a need to make sense of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed techniques from within the context of adult education, theory and practice.

It is not enough to describe the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques as theatre or drama-based experiential learning methodologies. This would be simplistic and inadequate. Boal, despite his reluctance to make clear the political assumptions that have informed his practices, has pointed out that "image theatre" explicitly acknowledges, addresses, and relies extensively on, the aesthetic dimension of apprehension as a viable context within which to communicate, dialogue and operate. For Boal the creative and pre-dominantly aesthetic engagement that is 'acting' or 'playmaking' is a rehearsal space, a reflective 'stage' for envisaging and experimenting with and practicing 'emancipatory' social action.

Consequently, the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices invites us to extend and elaborate on our understanding of the scope and nature of experiential learning and to define the role of the aesthetic dimension in the process of apprehension. This requires a re-working, and an elaboration on prevailing definitions and understandings of experience. In order to undertake the required conceptual reworking, we need to turn our full attention to the scope and nature of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. Hence in the following sections of this chapter an account of the scope and nature of Forum Theatre, the "cop in the head" and the discursive practices of image theatre will be provided.

6.1.1 Forum Theatre

Forum Theatre is the most popular and well known Theatre of the Oppressed practice. It is widely used in educational and developmental contexts and Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) identify a number of applications of Forum; these include consciousness raising, conflict resolution, social campaigning and political activism. While the more recent elaborations of Image Theatre like "cop in the head" and Legislative Theatre are becoming increasingly popular, it is Forum Theatre that remains the most widely known.

In summary, Forum Theatre aims to promote spectator or audience interventions in dramatic action. These interventions result in a change in the course of the dramatic action and the consequent facilitation of social learning for the "spect-actors" and the audience. Through the creative medium of improvised drama, the critical incident that demonstrates the protagonist's dilemma is presented. In this way, the main problem is posed during an initial ten to fifteen minute improvisation that ends with the frustration of the protagonist's "will". At the end of this first presentation of the action, the Joker, adopting the role of facilitator, seeks to involve the audience by alternately provoking and encouraging responses to the unsatisfactory conclusion of the improvisation.

The scene is performed again and this time the Joker invites the volunteers from the audience to take on the role of "spect-actors". This involves replacing the protagonist on stage, and trying to resolve the problem. The improvisation is performed again, on this occasion with the spect-actor in role. Members of the audience are allowed to replace unsuccessful "spect-actors" who have failed to adequately resolve the protagonist's dilemma. The antagonist who remains in role for the duration is under no obligation to cooperate with any of the spect-actors who take the protagonist's part and pit their skills against her or him.

Boal (1979) provides a detailed example of the way in which Forum can be used to generate and test solutions to real life problems. He explains how a group of factory workers used Forum to explore the available options for developing a plan of action in a situation in which they sought to protest exploitative working conditions in a Latin American factory. The problem was how to challenge the employer and force him to improve the conditions under which they worked. According to Boal, (1979) the initial Forum presentation consisted of workers on the production line discussing the course of action that lay open to them. They arrived at the decision that the most viable course of action was to break the machines and bring the entire production line to a close.

The improvisation revealed that it was relatively easy for the owner-manager to come along, repair the damaged machines, and set everyone back to work at an even more demanding pace. Clearly that course of action was not in the workers' best interests. The improvisation was re-presented and upon the Joker's suggestion and encouragement many spectators took the role of the protagonist, various strategies were put forward, developed and explored. Suggestions ranged from planting a bomb, to blowing up the factory or closing it down by staging a strike. Boal explains that in exploring these options it became clear that the bomb was counterproductive because it would put the factory out of operation and deny all the employees the opportunity to work and earn their much needed wages. It was agreed that a strike would be equally ineffective as it was clear that the owner-manager would simply go out and hire replacements from the ever abundant pool of unemployed people who are always available in Latin American countries that experience high levels of unemployment.

Through Forum, by allowing as many spect-actors as possible to experiment with a variety of interventions, the entire group was able to choose the most appropriate course of action. In this case the group agreed that the most appropriate response was to organize a small workers union for the purpose of negotiating the workers demands, politicizing the unemployed, and addressing welfare needs. According to Boal (1979) in this particular situation Forum Theatre was able to generate a solution

that was most appropriate for that particular audience at that particular time.

It is important to note that while Forum and the entire system of Theatre of the Oppressed practices is clearly committed to a larger ethical and moral project that is grounded in the broad principles of social justice, it is not a quest for universal resolutions to the issues that are explored. Rather, Forum Theatre aims to problematize social reality and explore the possible courses of action available. Boal (1979) explains that:

"it is not the place of theatre to show the correct path but only to offer the means by which all possible paths may be examined". [2]

Like the experiential learning practices that are associated with Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development, Forum Theatre provides a safe space for learners to explore the scope of agency and to experiment with forms of social action that may be new or unfamiliar. By enacting and consequently embodying the role of the frustrated protagonist in the context of Forum Theatre, we can not only act out and experiment with various resolutions, we can also experience the Gestalt from which the appropriate resolution emerges.

As Boal explains:

"Maybe the theatre itself is not revolutionary, but these theatrical forms are without doubt a rehearsal for revolution. The truth of the matter is that the "spect-actor" practices a real act even though he does it in fictional manner. While he rehearses throwing a bomb on stage, he is concretely rehearsing the way a bomb is thrown; acting out his attempt to organize a strike.

Within its fictitious limits the experience is a concrete one". [3]

In *Rainbow of Desire* (Boal 1995) emphasizes this capacity of the theatre to educate in the context of enactment, by democratizing the stage. Direct participation by the spect-actor is the basis of Theatre of the Oppressed, by involving the audience, the vocation of theatre is popularized and the passive spectator replaces the professional actor. Boal explains that:

"when the spectator herself comes on stage and carries out the action, she has in mind she does it in a manner that is personal, unique and non transferable as she alone can do it and as no other artist can do it in her place". [4]

Here Boal is clearly making the case for an empowered spect-actor who speaks and acts on his or her own behalf. While the political aspirations of Forum Theatre are clearly emancipatory, a close examination of the practice does reveal an overly simplistic reading of the relationship between knowledge and action.

This can be related to the way in which Forum Theatre appears to assume that the social dimension of learning relies exclusively on propositional and intellectual modes of knowing. This virtually excludes the recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of apprehension and the importance of explicitly addressing the affective, creative and imaginal domains when seeking to work with the social dimension of learning.

Boal's recognition of the pedagogical role of theatre signals an understanding of educational role of these domains, yet it is not until his later work in *Rainbow of Desire* (Boal, 1995) that he theorizes the facilitative role of the aesthetic dimension of experience and the complex nature of social agency.

6.1.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The "Cop In The Head" Techniques

Doug Patterson (1996) describes the "cop in the head" as Boal's extra-ordinary effort to apply Theatre of the Oppressed approaches, especially "image theatre", as a systematic psycho-therapeutic technique. [5] In this section of the study the nature of this important therapeutic elaboration of critical pedagogy will be explored. Patterson (1996) provides a descriptive account of the way in which the "cop in the head" techniques extend the scope of Forum Theatre by problematizing and exploring the psycho-social dimension of oppression. Patterson (1996) explains that:

"I might demonstrate a difficulty/an oppression I am encountering in dealing with a work colleague. I choose a person from the group to play that colleague tell them what they must do and say in the demonstration and then at a key moment when my internal oppressions may be at play, those in the workshop (or even performance) watching my demonstration then come forward to demonstrate physical images of slices of my behavior, my weaknesses and my strengths. Those images are kept which the audience and other participants, agree are fair representations of activity going on underneath my activity. Images are then added which externalize what the audience sees in the colleague. Through an extended series of situations and parallel actions, the various images weave in and out of numerous re-enactments of the initial scene.

At the conclusion of this one exercise which could take as long as 2-3 hours the original scene is re-played with intention that the protagonist will have learned more about their strengths and weaknesses as well as the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the antagonist." [6]

Here it is clear that the exercise moves from the individual to the group, from the single to the collective representation and interpretation of the critical incident. Hence, by dynamizing and focusing on the images, there is no need to repeat and interrogate the original story. In fact the participants whose story informs the action/improvisation may not have to tell the story to more than a single person. [7]

As Jackson (1995) notes there can be no wrong or right reading, no one reading, only multiple readings and consequently multiple re-presentations and "illuminative interpretations". The understanding depends on the reading of that group of people at that particular time in that particular place. In distinguishing between Forum Theatre and the "cop in the head" practices, Boal (1995) declares these techniques are grounded in the assumption that:

"The cops are in our head. ("flic dans la tete")

I started from the following hypothesis the cops are in our head but their headquarters and barracks must be on the outside. The task was to discover how these cops got into our head and to invent ways of dislodging them." [8]

Here Boal uses the metaphor of the 'cop' (flic) to speak about the internal constraints that often prevent us from doing the things we know we should do. This presents a very nuanced reading of action and we are reminded of the importance of recognizing and working with the social dimension of learning. For practitioners in the area of adult education who in the context of Village Three, Experiential Learning For Social Change, relate the cultivation of self-knowledge to the recognition and acknowledgment of moral agency, the therapeutic emphasis of the "cop in the head" technique signals an important connection. By using drama in ways that are traditionally associated with the therapeutic emphasis of Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development these techniques draw attention to the way in which educational practices that seek to promote moral learning need to incorporate both political and therapeutic considerations.

It should be noted that both Forum Theatre and the "cop in the head" seek to theorize and work with action as a source of knowledge. While Forum seeks to address what we should do in a given social situation, the "cop in the head" techniques asks how do we want to act and what is holding us back from acting in the way we want to act? At the most basic level the therapeutic component shifts us away from the static and reductionist tendencies that have been associated with the limitations of Forum. (Fisher, 1994; Salverson 1994) [9]

Most importantly, the suggestion that social learning in the context of political activism consists of simply knowing what to do is challenged. In its place is a far more nuanced understanding of the scope and nature of moral agency, one that suggests that the "will" to act in ways that promote social justice and democracy needs to be carefully and explicitly cultivated by educational practices that address the multi-dimensional nature of experience. This is an educational project that asks us to link feeling and doing. The point is made that moral learning is a distinctive dimension of education that requires the acknowledgment of the facilitative role of the aesthetic domain. [10]

The "cop in the head" techniques and their emphasis on the aesthetic domain is an important starting point for thinking about these aspects of educational practice. We are required to shift away from didactic instructional approaches that seek to convey moral precepts about social action by teaching propositional knowledge. Rather, we are encouraged to experiment with, and experience, radical variations in the way we act within the "safe" experimental context provided by the theatre. Hence we can develop a qualitative understanding of how it actually feels to act in ways that challenge the status quo in order to promote social justice and democracy.

6.2 Theatre As A Discursive Medium - Image Theatre

"Image theatre is a language, if it is translated into words, all its possible interpretations are reduced to a single one: the polysemy of the image is destroyed. But it is precisely in this polysemy that the richness of this language resides". [11]

In *Theatre Of The Oppressed*, Boal (1979) explains that "image theatre" arose directly out of the need to develop a way of using the body, to challenge everyday assumptions and understandings of the way things are. At the same time "image theatre" is meant to facilitate our capacity to imagine and express the way things should be. Schutzman (1994) describes "image theatre" as a subsystem, while Boal (1979) is clearly committed to working with what he sees as the radical potential of the material body. In introducing the theatre as a discursive terrain Boal (1979) explains that:

"We can begin by stating the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore to control the means of theatrical production, man must first of all control his own body, know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive. Then he will be able to practice theatrical forms in which by stages he frees himself from his condition of spectator and takes on that of actor, in which case he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, is changed from witness to protagonist". [12]

The assumption underlying this explanation is that social mores,

values and their related practices exert a disciplinary effect on our daily lives by imposing particular images of the self and its relation to the world. According to Boal (1979) we internalize these restrictive mores, even at a physical level. He states that:

"A simple example will serve to clarify this point, compare the muscular structure of a typist with that of a night watchman of a factory. The first performs his or her work seated in a chair: from the waist down the body becomes during working hours, a kind of pedestal while arms and fingers are active. The watchman on the other hand must walk continually during his eight hour shift and consequently will develop muscular structures that facilitate walking. The bodies of both become alienated in accordance with their respective types of work. [13]

Here Boal is exploring the material basis of social habits. It is important to read Boal's radical re-definition of theatre and the pedagogical significance of the material body alongside the previously mentioned work of Mark Johnson (1987) who links apprehension and the reading of meaning to cognitive and bodily structures. Johnson (1987) explores the way in which our apprehension of the world is actually grounded in the patterns of our bodily experience that he explains ultimately shape cognition. [14]

Boal's perception is that the very way in which we physically encounter the world shapes our apprehension and understanding.

The starting point for cognition is our material sense of our physical bodies in the world. From this perspective, "image theatre" exercises and activities, are more than simple games.

[15] Image theatre is intended to promote the acquisition of a creative expressive mode of communication that works beyond the boundaries of every day verbal language.

The "Slow Motion Race" and "Hypnosis" are two examples of the exercises that have these stated aims. In "Slow Motion" participants are required "to run a race with the aim of losing". Boal (1979) suggests that by moving in slow motion the body will find its center of gravity dislocated at each successive movement and so must again find a new muscular structure that will maintain its balance. "Hypnosis", involves pairs facing each other, one person places a hand a few centimeters away from her/his partner, who maintains the distance following the moving hand. This exercise, like the previous one, forces participants to take up positions that are radically at variance with their day to day experience of their body. These are examples of the way in which "image theatre" playfully addresses and works with the "image schematas" that Mark Johnson (1974) explains shape cognition. The exercises are excellent demonstrations of the ability of "image theatre" to carnivalize, as it were, our assumptions about how our bodies work and relate to the world at a material level.

Slow Motion Race and Hypnosis, ask us to creatively re-imagine our every-day ways of relating to the world. This requires the imaginative "joking" and consequent re-configuration of our basic physical orientation and our understanding of simple concepts like up, down, under and over. [16] It is interesting to note that the engagement in creative expressive forms of movement, like ordinary dance also seek to joke our everyday material orientation to the world in ways that intensify the sensorial dimension of experience. Image theatre carnivalizes the material body in much the same way as dance by playfully reversing the established image schematas we use on a day to day basis in order to make sense of the world. I would like to suggest that "image theatre" works in a provocative way with our established material patterns of experience in order to facilitate cognition. More importantly, "image theatre" is grounded in a radical reading of cognition that draws on a multi-dimensional definition of experience. This requires a recognition of the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension. In this way "image theatre" effectively challenges the established positivist philosophical frameworks that rigidly separate the body and the mind, cognition from emotion and reason from imagination.

It has already been established that Theatre of the Oppressed works primarily with the social dimension of learning and promotes the acquisition of cultural literacy. I would like to suggest here that "image theatre" seeks to promote social learning

by directing its interrogative gaze onto the material dimension of the social practices that sustain oppression.

It is instructive to note that Dewey (1933) refers to established and entrenched social practices as "habits" and draws our attention to the way in which the collective practice of particular habits are in essence the social practices that define culture. One of the major achievements of Dewey's work is its definition of education as a democratic project, that includes a relentless quest for the achievement of democratic ideals. It is against this background that working with and working on the habits that shape social practices is an integral aspect of this broader definition of education. These aspirations reflect the pre-occupations of experiential learning practices that are usually associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning For Social Change.[17]

For Boal, the material body is a significant discursive terrain that provides the opportunity to interrogate the habits that sustain oppressive social practices. This approach elaborates understandings of experiential learning practice developed by Heron (1993) and Mulligan (1993) theorists who can be associated with Village Four Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development. This focus on and definition of the material body as the receptor and mirror of dominant cultural and social practices reflects the concerns raised by Foucault's (1977) observations about the way in which the body is implicated

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in contemporary manifestations of disciplinary power.

Boal, suggests that:

"if one is able in this way to disjoint one's own muscular structures one will surely be able to assemble the structures and characteristics of other professions and social classes, that is one will be able to physically interpret characters different from oneself". [18]

This interpretation of characters that are different from oneself is an important framework for the facilitation of social learning, the education of the "habits" that Dewey refers to as part of the remit of educational practices. By recognizing the material components of action as a starting point for critically evaluating how people do the things they do and how they can do them differently, "image theatre" is a discursive medium of educational practice that explores and interrogates experience by working outside the boundaries of everyday language. In focusing on "habits" and seeking to de-construct them, image theatre is primarily concerned with exploring the underlying patterns that sustain social practices. By addressing these directly at the material level and within the aesthetic context of theatre, we can argue that "image theatre" enables learners to make the important connection between what they do, how they feel and the imaginative possibilities for acting differently. This is an important re-framing of experiential learning, that explicitly acknowledges the educational value of drama.

6.3 Theatre Of The Oppressed - Models And Applications

Theatre of the Oppressed promotes the transformative re-configuration of perspectives Candy (1981) identifies, the perspective transformation Mezirow (1977) refers to, and the "conscientization" process defined by Freire. While each of these theorists work within distinctive and somewhat separate ideological frameworks, they all support a corresponding recognition of the illuminative nature of the educational encounters that are transformative. Against this background we can understand "image theatre" as a reflection of Boal's commitment to working with social action from the outside in as it were, rather than the traditional more abstract and intellectual approaches that seek to work from inside out.

Forum theatre and the "cop in the head practices" are not the only applications of Boal's radical reworking of theatre. There are a range of "image theatre" models that are designed to critically interrogate and deconstruct social practices. Newspaper Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Breaking the Oppression, Myth Theatre, Rituals and Masks and Analytical Theatre are all examples of the way in which Theatre of the Oppressed practices can be used as models of critical discourse that focus on the particular forms of social and institutional practice that sustain oppression. In each instance the aim is to promote the forms of cultural literacy that help learners to critically read and make sense of their immediate world and the social relations that define it.

6.3.1 Newspaper Theatre

Newspaper Theatre consists of a number of ways of critically examining and exploring the content of newspapers. This model of Theatre of the Oppressed practice draws attention to the political impact of the editorial process. Drama is used to draw attention to the way in which information is filtered, processed and shaped by editorial activities. In Newspaper Theatre the news is presented dramatically in ways that satirize orthodox or traditional modes of presentation. This is done by detaching specific items from their context, and consequently illuminating or drawing attention to hidden or omitted details. Dramatic techniques used here may include mime and rhythmic readings of parallel presentations of various news media.

Fisher, (1994) an American educator gives an illuminating account of using Newspaper Theatre in the context of a women's studies course. Newspaper Theatre was used as an instructional medium that demonstrated the ways in which women's voices are absent or silenced in the printed media. Epskamp (1989) provides a wonderful example of the way in which Newspaper Theatre was used by the Arena Theatre company in Sao Paulo, immediately before Boal's imprisonment in the 1970's. [19]

6.3.2 Invisible Theatre

Invisible Theatre is considered to be the most controversial of the Theatre of the Oppressed practices as it relies on the unwitting participation of bystanders. Boal (1979) himself explains that Invisible Theatre came about because during the period of his exile in Argentina, his theatre company was unable to rehearse or perform with him as their director. They devised, Invisible Theatre so that they could effectively rehearse in the presence of their banned director. Boal (1995) describes Invisible Theatre in the following terms:

"It consists of the presentation of a scene in an environment other than the theatre, before people who are not spectators. The place can be a restaurant, a sidewalk, a market, a train, a line of people etc. The people who witness the scene are there by chance.

During the spectacle these people may not have the slightest idea that it is a spectacle, for this would make them spectators." [20]

For example, a group of actors may begin a discussion about the price of food in a supermarket check-out line. The genuine shoppers in the line are unaware that the sequence of the discussion is pre-arranged, or scripted. A number of dramatic devices are used to capture the attention and provoke the participation of the genuine shoppers who are unaware of the actors' roles and that they are participating in a drama.

The more topical the theme under review and discussion, the more engaged the spect-actors or non members of the cast are likely to become. The aim of the technique is to draw attention to the broader social implications of the issues that are raised. Hence throughout the dramatization the actors divulge important and illuminating information that is not normally in the public domain.

Invisible Theatre by its very nature raises serious ethical questions about the rights of individuals and the extent to which its hidden nature makes it a manipulative and exploitative practice. (Kohtes,1993) Boal's defensive response to these allegations is that as long as the intentions of the performers are honest and inspired by a genuine desire to confront and challenge social manifestations of oppression then Invisible Theatre is a justifiable educational practice.

6.3.3 Breaking The Oppression

Breaking the Oppression is another model of Theatre of the Oppressed discourse that uses image theatre to promote the critical exploration of problematic situations. For example, the protagonist, may enact the role of a worker who is being consistently discriminated against by her employers on the basis of her gender. This experience of oppression serves as the starting point for the presentation and consequent definition of the protagonist's will to break the oppression. By focusing on a single critical incident, the protagonist tries again and again to experiment with forms of action that may not have occurred to her when the situation initially happened in real time. In response, the antagonist seeks to make the situation more difficult by resisting the protagonist struggle to break the oppression.

In describing and commenting on Breaking the Oppression, Boal (1979) states:

"it is necessary to take care that the generic nature of the particular case under study be understood. In this type of theatrical experiment the particular instance must serve as the point of departure but it is indispensable to reach the general. The process to be realized during the actual performance or afterwards during the discussion is one that ascends from the phenomenon presented in the plot towards the social laws that govern those phenomenon.

The spectator participants must come out of this experience enriched with the knowledge of those laws, obtained through analysis of the phenomena." [21]

This definition of Theatre of the Oppressed as a search for collective meaning that is defined by exploring the particular and linking this to larger more universal understandings is supported by Jackson's descriptive comments on the collective implications of Forum:

"what a roomful of people believe at a particular point in time" [22]

Boal (1979) is defining Theatre of the Oppressed as a method of inquiry in terms that correspond closely with Freire's (1972; 1974) account of the critical capacity of dialogue to effectively move from the exploration of particular instances of oppression to the recognition of more general manifestations of exploitation. For example, the protagonist and the group may explore the dynamics of exploitative male/female relationships. Although the initial improvisation that provided the starting point for the inquiry may be a single incident, the consequent establishment and exploration of the dynamics of resistance can establish the kind of creative energy that shifts the group away from the specifics of the situation to more general theorizing.

6.3.4 Myth Theatre

Myth Theatre is another Theatre of the Oppressed practice that relies on "image theatre" as a distinctive mode of communication that is capable of problematizing and exploring the romantic agendas that underwrite the popular myths that shape our understanding of social reality. By acting out the underlying assumptions that inform these myths we can identify their personal and wider social impact. The mythic dimensions can then be compared to reality. For example, the popular story of Cinderella can be presented in a dramatic form and examined for its connection to widely accepted "social truths" about the nature of female dependency on the mythical "Prince Charming".

For women who live in cultures whose dominant social practices often sustain the mythology of all powerful male Princes rescuing helplessly weak women, the dramatic representation of the deconstruction of this myth can be enlightening and ultimately instructive. Hence by delineating the way in which some myths have shaped our apprehension of social reality, Myth Theatre aims to demonstrate how the influence of particular stories has limited the capacity of specific social groups to recognize their ability to act for themselves in ways that are empowering and ultimately liberating.

6.3.5 Analytical Theatre

Analytical Theatre uses image theatre as a discursive mode in order to promote critical inquiry and consequently the social learning required for the acquisition of cultural literacy. Analytical Theatre explores the ways in which images serve as repositories of our collective knowledge and understanding of social arrangements and relations. Hence Analytical Theatre effectively takes apart the components of the representations of the taken for granted symbols of the cultural institutions that regulate every day life. The aim is to develop a deeper understanding of the way in which the processes of social regulation and control works.

The technique is relatively straightforward, the group presents an improvisation. The social roles are identified and labeled by the selection of an object that becomes a symbol of that role. For example, a spect-actor may take the role of an unemployed woman. In defining the many social roles she plays in real life she may use an array of visible and easily identifiable "props." For example, pushing a buggy or pram across the stage may represent the joys or burdens of motherhood, while an elaborately feminine attire may convey the pressure of sustaining an impractical standard image of feminine beauty. The adoption of an exaggerated feminine walk may combine with all the preceding role "props" to present an image of a character deformed by an uncritical reading of femininity.

Once the initial scene has been enacted, it can be played again with at least one of the objects or "props" removed as that aspect of the social role is symbolically shed. The story sustaining the improvisation will be gradually re-invented as the various aspects of roles are shed or elaborated on.

This model of Theatre of the Oppressed practice can be seen as a multi-dimensional interpretation of Freire's delineation of "conscientization". Through the process of drama, we are able to represent, play with and critically explore a variety of images of social reality. By shifting between and among multiple representations of the themes under critical review these practices offer the opportunity for apprehending and developing a deep understanding of social action and its wider implications. This process reflects the broad aims of education defined by both Dewey and Freire.

6.3.6 Rituals and Masks

Rituals and Masks is similar in intention and practice to Analytical Theatre as it seeks to explore the rituals that mediate all human actions. The focus here is on the way in which social practices become entrenched. The aim is to promote a critical analysis of the "habits" that define the way we do things. A good example would be the ways in which people greet each other in social encounters, the accompanying gestures and actions are often governed by expectations that are related to age, gender, social class and social setting. These habits are taken for granted and we rarely question their meaning, significance or function.

6.4 Theatre Of The Oppressed As A Discursive Medium - A Critical Overview

It is clear that the central premise of Theatre of the Oppressed is that we can critically examine prevailing social practices within the context of drama. This signals the pedagogical intentions of Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal's work also suggests that through the critical representation of the material specifics of social practices we can interrogate the things we do and the way we do them. The aim is to promote and bring to the fore the social dimension of learning in a way that emphasizes human agency and the particular capacity of people who experience oppression to undertake emancipatory actions. It is important to note that the Forum Theatre's initial emphasis on action has now been developmentally followed by the more nuanced exploration of the scope of social agency promoted by the "cop in the head" practices.

This recent willingness to openly address the psycho-social dimension of action and relate it to the social dimension of learning is an important staging post in the development of Theatre of the Oppressed. For adult education practitioners, it is also an instructive development as frequently an over emphasis on the political importance of critical theory and practice can over shadow the benefits of acknowledging the extent to which the psycho-social dimension of action determines the actual willingness of people to act in ways that demonstrate a commitment to radical ideological positions.

The work of Giroux, (1988; 1992) Brah and Hoy, (1989) and other supporters of the critical perspective that defines the practices associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning For Social Change, often fails to openly acknowledge the educational significance of the way in which the affective structures of experience shape action and the capacity to act. Effective work with the social dimension of learning requires a clear consideration of how people feel about themselves, others, and the issues that are being explored. Theatre of the Oppressed forces us to pay attention to these often overlooked aspects of pedagogy.

SECTION III

CHAPTER 7

Theatre of the Oppressed - The Aesthetic Space

7.1 "The Aesthetic Space" - An Overview

In seeking to make sense of and explore how Theatre of the Oppressed works, we need to understand the specific contribution of aesthetics. Boal's delineation of the aesthetic dimension of experience deals with the way in which the framework of theatre facilitates the deployment of the imagination and the creative sensibilities. Boal clearly recognizes that this is important as his more recent work (Boal 1995) devotes considerable attention to exploring the nature and scope of what he refers to as the "aesthetic space".

For Boal, theatre is a medium of instruction that relies on the "as if" capacity of the imagination in order to re-present and effectively dramatize every day action and experience. Hence the dramatic presentation of action can in some ways be seen as a distinctive form of experience that draws on the imagination in a particular way and communicates meaning through the arts. Senge, (1994) a well known organizational development "guru", in reflecting on the meaning of theory highlights the way in which the theatre effectively refers to the presentation of theory. He explains:

"By the term theory I mean a fundamental set of propositions about how the world works, which has been subjected to repeated tests and in which we have gained some confidence. The English word theory comes from the Greek root word "theo-ros" meaning spectator.

This derives from the same root as the word "theater". Human beings invent theories for the same basic reason they invent theater to bring out into a public space a play of ideas that may help us to better understand our world" [1]

Senge (1990) goes on to regret the loss of this deeper meaning of theory and the prevailing dominance of the misguided assumption that theory is science. He argues that this scientific understanding of theory often overlooks the "passion", "imagination" and "excitement" of something new in the world. If we view Theatre of the Oppressed from this perspective then aesthetics, and the consideration of the educational implications of aesthetic modes of engagement are significant areas requiring critical analysis and conceptual refinement. We are in essence asking how is the experience of drama different from and or similar to everyday experience? At a more general level we are also asking what is the role of the aesthetic domain of experience?

In order to effectively answer these primarily philosophical questions about the scope and nature of the aesthetic dimension of experience and to relate our response to the more specific area of experiential learning, we must turn our attention to Boal's (1994) delineation of "the aesthetic space". I would like to suggest that a delineation of "the aesthetic space" will help us to understand and make sense of the epistemological implications of the aesthetic dimension of experience.

More specifically by closely examining how the dramatic arts encode and convey meaning within the context of theatre we can move towards an understanding of the educational significance of Theatre of the Oppressed.

Boal, (1995) clearly indicates that "the aesthetics space" is both the physical and the metaphysical "space" within which theatre is conducted. He explains that this space may be physically or imaginatively set aside and designated as the stage. Its operation as "the stage" relies on a mutual recognition of its function and purpose by both the actors and audience.

In support of this he explains:

"Whatever the process by which the bounds of this limited space have been determined we then accept it as the "aesthetic space" and it acquires all of the concomitant properties even in the absence of a physical platform or any other object; it is a space within a space, a super-imposition of spaces. It can be the corner of a room, or a space around a tree in the open air. We simply decide that here is the stage and the rest of the room, or the rest of whatever is being used is the auditorium a smaller space within a larger space. The interpenetration of these two spaces is the "aesthetic space". [2]

It is the imagination that invests the actions and experience presented within "the aesthetic space" with the "as if" quality that characterize the activities of drama and theatre.

According to Boal (1995) the creative sensibilities are informed and shaped by the emotional components of experience. Hence passion is a key faculty that energizes and directs the human action. Boal's (1995) working definition of theatre clearly demonstrates the significance of the affective dimension and its capacity to energize the qualities of the "aesthetic space". He explains that:

"theatre is two human beings, a passion and a platform".

[3]

Although Boal is quoting from the work of Lope de Vega whom he acknowledges as a pre-eminent Spanish dramatist, it is clear that passion is central to this definition of action in the context of the theatre. Boal (1995) defines passion as:

"a feeling for someone or something, an idea that we prize more highly than our own life". [4]

Hence the raised platform of theatre can be seen as an "imaginatively elevated area", a creative space that is infused with both feeling and action. This location of passion in the context of action is an important point of departure for thinking about education. Greene, (1995) an educational philosopher, whose area of concern is arts education and the distinctive contribution of aesthetics, identifies passion as the energizer that shapes and grounds critical engagement.

In summary, according to Boal (1995) emotions, "the stuff" of the affective domain, are creatively projected into the "aesthetic space" and the overall effect is to create a multi-dimensional

mode of apprehension that is simultaneously plastic, dichotomous and teleological. These three qualities are for Boal (1995) the properties of "the aesthetic space" that are brought to fore when experience is presented and in a sense "theorized" within the dramatic medium of theatre.

As previously indicated, theatre relies on the establishment, communication and the maintenance of the "as if" framework of dramatic action. Both the spectators and the actors are required to "willingly" suspend their disbelief in so far as they must come to accept at some level the reality of the dramatic action. [5] Hence drama, and consequently theatre is in essence a concrete expression of make believe, an elaborate form of play that is regulated by conventions. The plastic, dichotomous and teleological nature of "the aesthetic space" as outlined by Boal (1995) are the playful and transforming qualities that create and make possible the "as if" reality of dramatic action. The mediative influence of these three properties of the "aesthetic space" invests everyday action with performative energy and converts it into dramatic experience. Against this background it can be asserted that the development of an understanding of the "aesthetic space" is a central feature of this study's exploration of the educational implications of the Theatre of the Oppressed system.

7.1.1 The Plasticity of the "Aesthetic Space"-

"We Can Imagine Our Selves To Be....."

Although the plastic, dichotomous and teleological properties of "the aesthetic space" are explained as being virtually inseparable and function inter-dependently it is useful to consider them individually as Boal does in *Rainbow of Desire*. (Boal, 1995). In referring to the plasticity of the "aesthetic space" Boal is alluding to the way in which dramatic action uses the memory and the imagination in order to traverse and transgress the established boundaries of reality. For example, the actor or spect-actor can imaginatively reach forwards and backwards in time drawing on events that may be imagined or real.

In demonstrating this plasticity, Boal indicates "one can be without being." Hence we can locate ourselves in settings and situations that are beyond the boundaries of our immediate reality. For example, in any dramatic improvisation, through the use of particular conventions, the stage can become a palatial dwelling or a slum. The performers can "play" a variety of roles ranging from the most powerful figure to the humblest victim. Simple objects can be transformed into significant items. It is the plastic nature of "the aesthetic space" that promotes and facilitates the deployment of the imagination in this creative manner.

Within the context of the theatre we can imagine things that defy the immediate constraints of time and place. For example, in a Forum Theatre improvisation, the spect-actors draw on their knowledge to shape their performance of the protagonist role. Hence they can act in what would normally be considered an extra-ordinary way. This extra-ordinary response may be outside their everyday patterns of action but it is promoted by the emotional intensity of the make believe qualities of the "aesthetic space". By acting differently we can also come to think differently. This capacity to think differently is a key component of educational practices that seek to address the social dimension of learning. As Courtney (1997) explains:

"Significant learning is aesthetic, a change in the quality of thought. There is an alteration in how we think more than in what we think; by changing the how we can more effectively deal with the what. This is commonly called learning to learn, which rests on feeling, imagining, self conscious complex conceptual frameworks and the use of both information and meta-perspectives. These are exactly the characteristics of the aesthetic mode of thought". [6]

In the area of adult education, this capacity to become self consciously aware of the process of learning is theoretically explored by Smith (1981) whose work provides one of many insightful accounts of the educational significance of the process of meta-cognition.

The "aesthetic space", as delineated by Boal, (1995) facilitates the emergence of meta-cognition and the associated capacity to be self-consciously aware of learning.

Boal (1995) asserts that "the aesthetic space" draws on both the affective and the oneric qualities or properties of experience. According to Boal, the qualitatively dreamlike texture of dramatic action depends on the infusion of the imagination by passion. Consequently, memory provides the raw material of drama and according to Boal (1995):

"is composed of all the ideas we have ever had, all the sensations and emotions we have ever experienced which remain stored within us" [7]

The oneric or dream like projections are the configurations of situations that do not exist in concrete reality. Because of the strength of the affective component of these fictions, the dramatic representations of theatre are in a sense real. In fact the success of our encounter with drama is often measured by the extent to which our feelings are "truly" engaged. It is this emotionally charged dreamlike engagement of the memory and the imagination that defines the plastic nature of "the aesthetic space".

This study cites Ann Weaver Hart's (1990) reference to the rich texture and qualitative immediacy of experiential knowledge. [8] It can be suggested that she was implicitly drawing attention to the particular emotional and imaginative richness of experience

and its capacity to effectively draw on and work with memory in ways that energize and carry forward the process of meaning making. For educators this is an important point of departure.

It is fair to assert that there has been a tendency within the "serious" discourses of education to dismiss the value of "playful" and what are often seen to be non, or even irrational, forms of engagement. Hence the speculative and sometimes freewheeling nature of experiential knowledge is often seen as fanciful, imaginatively charged and consequently invalid. The pursuit of "hunches", the forging of improvisational connections across disparate and traditionally unrelated boundaries of knowledge is often seen as being contrary to the positivist epistemological tradition.

As previously indicated in this study, Best (1992) provides an elaborate philosophical exploration of the "rationality of feeling". He suggests that contrary to popular beliefs and understandings of the nature of the emotions, feelings are not wild and unpredictable as they can consistently be associated with particular conditions and circumstances. From this perspective Best (1992) is able to convincingly argue that the emotions are purposeful and can be seen as an integral aspect of apprehension. This is supported by Winston's (1998) demonstration of the way in which the inherent "logic" of the feeling dimension of experience can be worked within the context of "process drama". [9]

Winston's (1998) work is particularly instructive as it effectively provides an example of the way in which the "plastic" property of the aesthetic space can be used to facilitate the challenging task of conveying to school age children the "thick" concepts of virtue and moral agency. As previously mentioned in this study both Heron (1993) and Mulligan (1993) support the use of experiential learning practices that explicitly address and work with the affective dimension of experience. The practices associated with Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development explicitly seek to address and work with the affective component of experience. This is particularly true of the Gestalt based experiential learning practices. [10] Consequently we can assert that there is already some recognition of the educational implications of the "plastic" property of the "aesthetic space". Hence it is important that this study extends and expands upon that already established connection.

7.1.2 The Dichotomous Nature of "The Aesthetic Space" "We Can See Ourselves....."

According to Boal, the second attribute of "the aesthetic space" is its dichotomous nature. This refers to the capacity of the creative and imaginative "as if" context of theatre to consciously re-present the self as a knowing subject.

Boal explains:

"The second property of the aesthetic space is that it creates dichotomy and all those who penetrate it become dichotomic there". [11]

In the descriptive and theoretical accounts of the nature and scope of experiential learning explored in the previous chapters, specific attention was given to delineating the significance of reflective practices. For educators who recognize the educational implications of working with experiential knowledge, it is the critical reflection on concrete experience that transforms experience into knowledge. [12] When, like Freire, (1972; 1974; 1997) we define education in broad terms that take into consideration critical reflection on the material conditions of those who are oppressed, we are espousing an understanding of subjectivity that is grounded in the recognition of the primacy of human agency. This locates the capacity to consciously act and exercise agency at the very center of existence.

Freire explains this in the following terms:

"Human beings are active beings capable of reflection on themselves and on the activity in which they are engaged. They are able to detach themselves from the world in order to find their place in and with it. Only people are capable of this act of separation in order to find their place in the world and enter in a critical way to look into their own reality. To enter into this reality means to look at it objectively and apprehend it as one's field of action and reflection. It means to penetrate it more and more lucidly in order to discover the true interactions between the facts observed". [13]

In many ways Boal's (1995) delineation of the dichotomous scope of theatre echoes and substantiates this explanation of "conscientization". More specifically, by locating this desire to read the world as the central purpose of human existence both Freire (1974) and Boal (1995) suggest that knowledge of the self in the world as "an active subject" is "the ontological vocation" in which all assumptions about the nature of education should be grounded. This understanding of the role and aim of education and its related activities suggests that it is through the reflective and critical re-cognition of the self that we learn who we are and what we can do in the world.

Boal (1992) asserts that as "the first human invention" theatre is fundamental to human existence and arises out of the human desire to self-consciously recognize and direct the self:

"Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that it is in this act of seeing it can see itself in situ - see itself seeing". [14]

Using the mythic account of Xhua Xhua, Boal seeks to explain theatre as a natural response to an innate desire to discover and represent the self to the self and to others. Xhua Xhua, the first human, gives birth and in experiencing the anxiety of separation from her off-spring arrives at a self-conscious understanding of herself, the significance of her personal identity and its capacity for directing social action. It is through her chance encounter with a reflection of herself in a pool of water that she acquires this qualitative grasp of her subjectivity. She discovers that not only can she act, she can simultaneously see and monitor herself in action. More importantly, Xhua Xhua can exercise choice and reflect on the consequences of her choices. Here Xhua Xhua's experience is a metaphor for the "doubling" property of "the aesthetic space".

Boal declares that:

"...in this sense the invention of theatre is a revolution of Copernican proportions. In our daily lives we are the center of our universe and we look at facts and people from a single perspective, our own.

On stage we continue to see the world as we have always seen it, but we also see it as others see it, we see ourselves as we see ourselves and we see ourselves as we are seen. To our own point of view we add others, as if we were able to view the earth from the earth where we live and also from the moon, the satellite or the stars. In daily life, we see the situation; on stage we see ourselves and we see the situation we are in". [15]

Hence through the particular experiential nature of theatre we can see ourselves in action. Boal (1995) explains this in the following terms:

"On stage the actor is who he is and who he seems to be. He is here and now in front of us, but he is also far away from us in another place. In another time, where the story he is telling and experiencing is taking place: he is Sergio Cardoso or John Gielgud and he is Hamlet. Being a space which creates dichotomy, the aesthetic space dichotomizes the spectators: we are here, seated in this very room, at the same time we are in a castle off Elsinore." [16]

Dramatic enactment in the context of the theatre enables us to get besides ourselves while simultaneously observing ourselves in action. This provides the opportunity to playfully experiment with the possibilities for action.

"Observing itself, the human being perceives what it is, discovers what it is not and imagines what it could become. It perceives where it is and where

it is not and imagines where it could go". [17]

The creative sensibilities are important here as they are used to delineate the ways in which we can imagine and rehearse our options for action. Boal (1995) explains that:

"theatre has nothing to do with buildings or other physical constructions. Theatre or theatricality is this capacity, this human property which allows man to observe himself in action, in activity. This self knowledge thus acquired allows him to be the subject (the one who observes) of another subject, (the one who acts). It allows him to imagine variations of his action to study alternatives. Man can see himself in the act of seeing, in the act of acting, in the act of feeling, in the act of thinking. Feel himself feeling the act of thinking himself thinking." [18]

Theatre promotes a form of double consciousness that is instructive in so far as it can shape choice by promoting reflection on action. It is educational in so far as it promotes a kind of self knowledge that can underwrite our capacity to do things differently. It should be noted that this particular projection of the self as an active responsible subject relies on a multi-dimensional reading of the social self. Over time, Boal's construction of a reflexive subjectivity in the context of theatre has been even more elaborate as he has moved on to explore the social and psychological pathology of the modern "desiring" subject.

Hence spect-actor in the Rainbow of Desire practices is a more psychologically and socially complex character. The "cop in the head" exercises are important as they dramatize and make real the contradictory yearnings of indecision; a demonstration of the overwhelming array of personal choices that characterize modern existence.

As previously indicated, reflection on action is a central component of experiential learning practices that aim to promote personal development and perspective transformation. [19] This is supported by Freire's (1974) observation that:

"To begin with only human beings, that is beings who work, who possess a thought language, those who act and who are capable of reflection on themselves, on their own action (such actions becoming separate entities) only they are beings of praxis. They are praxis. Only they are beings of relations in a world of relations. Their presence in this world, a presence which is a being with, compromises a permanent confrontation of the human being with the world. Detaching themselves from their surroundings they transform their environment. They do not merely adapt to it. Humans are consequently beings of decision. Detachment from one's environment can only be achieved in relation with that environment." [20]

This ability to establish and maintain a critical and reflective "detachment" that simultaneously locates us as subjects and observers of the discourses we are engaged in, is a key component of Dewey's (1916) understanding of the role of education. Tomlinson (1997) notes that Dewey defined democracy as a way of life rather than a body of institutions. Dewey (1916) was convinced that social reforms could only be achieved when individuals were educated in the intellectual skills and social values necessary for the exercise of democratic citizenship.

It is within this context that the scientific mode of inquiry provides a blue print for Dewey's understanding of deliberative reflection. [21] The establishment of critical distance and the consequent recognition of ourselves as active subjects capable of choice are indispensable components of this understanding of reflection. It is our capacity to make sense of ourselves as actors, exercising agency that underpins Dewey's (1915) perception of the ordinary person as a moral philosopher capable of choosing to act in ways that demonstrate an acknowledgment of the ideals and values of equity and fairness. By framing this understanding of agency in the context of theatre and demonstrating how "the aesthetic space" invests the process of critical reflection with a particular quality of creative intensity, Boal (1995) demonstrates the educational value of the aesthetic dimension of experience.

7.1.3 The Teleological Nature of "The Aesthetic Space" "We Can Practice Acting Differently....."

According to Boal the teleological nature of "the aesthetic space" is the third and final property that shapes the capacity of the theatre to facilitate and promote the generation of knowledge.

This is because on the stage, gestures, movements and the very nuances of action are both magnified and slowed down. We are made aware of and encouraged to focus on the body in ways that are distinctive from our everyday practices. Within the theatre, the body becomes a text in and of itself. This contrasts sharply with the body's role as sub-text in normal and everyday transactions.

A useful descriptive metaphor is the image of a film in slow motion. Under these conditions we can focus on the nuances and subtleties of action. This in turn expands our scope for apprehension and understanding. The context of theatre enables us to critically focus on the performative elements of action and relate cognition to action. [22] This is of particular importance for educators as instructional practices often derive their power and influence as a direct result of their capacity to incorporate ritual forms that contain and consequently discipline action. As previously explained, in *Schooling As A Ritual Performance*, McLaren (1993) explores this theory at length.

Mark Johnson, (1987) in *The Body in the Mind* provides a complimentary conceptual framework for thinking about and making sense of the ways in which apprehension, cognition and ultimately the way in which we think are all connected to the ritualized and material aspects of action. He argues convincingly that the metaphors that frame the way we make sense of the world are grounded in our material and bodily sense of ourselves.

In commenting on the way in which performance in the context of the theatre draws attention to the significance of the body as a textual repository of psycho-social meaning, Boal (1995) observes that:

"It is interesting to note that the word "psyche" which designates the whole ensemble of psychic phenomena that make up a personal unity, also designates a "cheval glass" a fixed mirror, the angle of which can be adjusted to allow one to see one's whole body". [23]

He concludes:

"In the psyche/mirror one sees one's body (in the theatre) one sees one's psyche..." [24]

As indicated in this study's preceding descriptive account of Theatre of the Oppressed, the Masks and Rituals exercises of "image theatre" are used to deconstruct and critically explore common sense assumptions about the nature of taken for granted images and action. For example, we can disassemble the popular "image" of a policeman or "cop" by carefully analyzing a dramatically improvised material representation and embodiment of a policeman.

We are also in effect exploring the social construction and the related political implications of policing. By identifying and, as it were, deconstructing the material symbols that are associated with authority and the exercise of "policing power", one can make sense of the sustaining "rituals" and "masks" that symbolize the power and authority of specific cultural and social practices.

These practices of critical deconstruction can serve as a framework for exploring how power is organized, institutionalized and expressed by various sources of authority. This in turn encourages the emergence and development of a recognition of the political implications of a critical understanding of the dominant social practices. More importantly, we are provided with a theatre based framework for problematizing specific spheres of social action like the work place, the domestic sphere and broader political, social, and economic landscapes. In this sense Theatre of the Oppressed provides an investigative framework that in many ways corresponds with Freire's (1974) description of the role of "dialogue":

"Of fundamental importance to education is an authentically gnosiological condition, the problematization of the world of work, products, ideas, convictions, aspirations, myths, art and science. The world is short of culture and history which is the result of the relations between human beings and the world. To present this human world as a problem for human beings is to propose that

they enter into it critically taking the operation as a whole, their action and that of others on it.

It means re-entering into the world through the entering into of the previous understandings which may have been arrived at naively because reality was not examined as a whole. In entering their own world people become aware of their manner of acquiring knowledge and realize the need of knowing even more. In this lies the whole force of education in the gnosiological condition." [25]

For the spect-actor who takes the part of the protagonist in a Forum piece their improvisation enables them to "act out" in a theatrical sense their resolution of the problem. At the most obvious level the spect-actor acts out a particular choice, a particular theory of action that may or may not be appropriate. The validity and the authenticity of the action are offered for scrutiny. From within the context of "the aesthetic space" we can ask is this an appropriate response? More importantly, we can ask is this an authentic response? In this sense, Theatre of the Oppressed generates and works with experiential knowledge in ways that elaborate and extend on the experiential learning practices that are associated with Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth and Development. [26]

The Three Wishes, a "Cop in the Head" exercise described in Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1995) is a good example of a specific Theatre of the Oppressed practice that relies on "image theatre"

in order to generate and work with a range of responses to a critical incident. Following a sculpted representation of a representative and embodied "image of oppression" the protagonist is offered three wishes. Each wish provides the opportunity to change or shift elements of the sculpted re-presentation of "oppression". Each successive change represents a shift or transition, a movement towards a choreographed resolution of the problem or dilemma that is being explored. We can come to recognize in concrete terms the full implications of the process of transition from one state to another. As there are no verbal or spoken exchanges until the debriefing at the very end of the exercise, there is a reliance on non-verbal expression and communication. The bodies that make up the sculpture are used to convey meaning. Both observers and participants rely on the performing body as the primary medium of communication. This example demonstrates the way in which the teleological property of the "aesthetic" space can facilitate the presentation and reading of experience.

Many of the exercises outlined in Rainbow of Desire (Boal, 1995) demonstrate the disparity between what we intend to do and what we actually do. This is an area of concern that is addressed in adult and continuing education. Focusing mainly on personal development in the context of organizational and work related training, Argyris and Schon (1974) have developed an investigative model of inquiry that aims to surface the hidden assumptions that often sabotage "espoused values" and generate

contradictory "theories in action". [27] This refers to the prevalent practice of acting in ways that undermine values and ideals we often claim to espouse as the principles that guide our actions. Many of the exercises outlined by Boal (1995) in *Rainbow of Desire* have a similar function. They aim to explore the problematic interface of theory and action, and the relationships that define the impact of values on performance. This involves the examination of the frequently unacknowledged disparity between what we say we want to do and what we actually do. It is the teleological property of "the aesthetic space" that enables us to focus on the choreographic elements of action and the related capacity of the material body to serve as a text that can be both read and written on and into.

7.2 The Aesthetic Space Is Educational - A Note To Experiential Learning Practitioners.

In summary, Boal argues that the "aesthetic space " is knowledge generating; its plasticity allows memory and imagination to range across the boundaries of the past, the present and the future. Its dichotomic nature facilitates our stepping beyond the dramatic characters enabling us through doubling to draw on a reflexive perspective. Finally, the telemicroscopic qualities of drama enhances the process of critical and interrogative scrutiny by magnifying the nuanced nature of action. This results in a focusing and decoding of the cues that signal how we interiorize our experiential knowledge of ourselves and our place in the world. In Boal's own words:

"Theatre is this psychic mirror, where we can see our psyche. Theatre holds 'a mirror up to nature'. [Shakespeare] And Theatre of the Oppressed is a mirror which we can penetrate to modify our image". [28]

This process of modification is one of the most important aspects of Theatre of the Oppressed making the system of practices educational in so far as they provide the framework for the emergence of a unique distillation of reflection in the context of action. Here I am defining Theatre of the Oppressed as a radical praxis that aims to choreograph and script ways of acting in the world that are emancipatory and liberating. Theatre of the Oppressed encourages us to understand that within the parameters of performance, "the aesthetic space" enables us to not only think of and imagine the ways in which we may act

differently, but to go ahead and actually "experience" the process of acting differently. On this basis we can make sense of the implications of the choices we make.

Through the use of the dramatic process, and the consequent deployment of the properties of the aesthetic space, Theatre of the Oppressed promotes a distinctive mode of meta-cognition. This enables us to become critically aware of both what and how we are learning. Through the intensely emotional and creative properties of the "aesthetic space", the spect-actor can critically reflect as an active subject who can imaginatively project and think differently about both the self and its relationship with the problem under review. From this perspective the theatre is a reflective and ultimately critical space and the spect-actor becomes a creative, imaginative and self-conscious investigator who works with experiential knowledge in ways that highlight the educational role of the social dimension of learning. Boal explains:

"In everyone of us there is an actor, someone who acts and a spect-actor who watches the actor act. We have the ability to watch ourselves doing things. The other animals even in front of the mirror they don't recognize their own reflection, they don't use it to improve". [29]

The educational significance of Theatre of the Oppressed lies in its capacity to generate worthwhile knowledge that is grounded in and arises directly out of the experience of performance. Learners are able to connect with and relate to this experiential knowledge emotionally. The way in which the properties of the "aesthetic space" work with and energize experiential knowledge in the context of performance is instructive for adult education practitioners as it illuminates our understanding of experiential learning practices by drawing attention to the educational significance of the aesthetic domain. It is clear that the properties of the "aesthetic space" enhance the process of apprehension and consequently shape the very way we think. The Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices frames and brings this to the fore in a way that contributes to prevailing understandings of the scope and nature of experiential learning practices.

Most importantly, this interpretative exploration of Boal's delineation of the properties of "the aesthetic space" suggest that through the use of the creative and imaginative energies we can at least momentarily transcend the conditions of our immediate social existence. It is important to note that much of the attention that has been given to the collective approaches to the promotion of "conscientization" often overlook the creative aspects of a reflexive subjectivity. This can be related to a tendency to underestimate the individual and distinctive nature of creative sensibility.

In commenting on what he refers to as "Marxist aesthetics" Marcuse (1979) observes that:

"Liberating subjectivity constitutes itself in the inner history of individuals - their own history, which is not identical with their social existence. It is the particular history of the individuals - their encounters, their passions, joys and sorrows - experiences which are not necessarily grounded in their class situation, and which are not even comprehensible from this perspective. To be sure, the actual manifestations of their history are determined by their class situation, but this situation is not the ground of their fate - of that which happens to them. Especially in its non material aspects it explodes the class framework. It is also too easy to relegate love and hate, joy and sorrow, hope and despair to the domain of psychology, thereby removing them from the concerns of a radical praxis." [30]

In exploring the way in which a radical praxis must be under-written by the energies of an illuminative aesthetic, Theatre of the Oppressed allocates a central role to these emotional considerations that are often dismissively relegated to the domain of psychology. The plastic, dichotomous, and teleological properties of the "aesthetic space" can and do take the spect-actor metaphorically beyond the boundaries of the conditions of immediate social existence.

CHAPTER 8

Theatre of the Oppressed and the Re-presentation of Experience

8.1 Re-presentation - A Consideration Of The Significance Of Form

"In the beginning, actor and spectator co-existed in the same person, the point at which they were separated, when some specialized as actors and others as spect-actors marks the birth of the theatrical forms we know today. Also born at this time were 'theatres' architectural constructions intended to make sacred this division, this specialization. The profession of "actor" takes its first bow". [1]

This chapter draws attention to the way in which the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices challenges the dominant conventions and styles of theatre in order to develop a popular model of theatre that is both instructive and educational in its focus. In seeking to demonstrate the educational significance of Boal's innovative adaptation of established theatre conventions and practices, this chapter will draw on the disciplinary areas of literary studies and anthropology. The work of the feminist scholar, Conway (1998) in the area of gender and autobiography will be explored as an illustrative example. In addition, Handelman's (1997) contribution in the area of anthropology will be used to draw attention to the capacity of rituals to re-present experience and ultimately shape meaning.

For practitioners in the area of adult education who use experiential learning practices it is important to develop an understanding of the way in which the forms of instruction can shape meaning.

Freire (1972) explains at length, the way in which pedagogical practices shape the focus and conduct and overall aims of education. In his rejection of "banking" approaches to pedagogy Freire (1972) explores the democratic implications of "dialogue" as an instructive model of communication. He explains that the form and style of dialogue reflects the democratic principles of equality and fairness.

From this perspective, we can recognize reflective practices as being more than the recalling and presentation of experience. The reflective focus of experiential learning practices means that they work with and excavate memory in particular ways. The specific forms in which learners recall and re-present experience is as important as the content. In our re-telling of our experience we can position ourselves as neutral spectators or active spect-actors. As previously indicated commentators like Usher and Edwards (1994) and Brah and Hoy (1989) have drawn our attention to the way in which the uncritical use of autobiography in the context of experiential learning can result in distorted understandings of social reality.

In the context of experiential learning, reflective practices effectively shape meaning through the way in which they work with and represent experience. [2] For example, the reflective practices associated with Village One, The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning are primarily concerned with the re-presentation of experience in forms that demonstrate the

acquisition of the competencies that are being evaluated. [3] In sharp contrast, the outcomes of "conscientization" that are associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change are less easy to demonstrate or evaluate. [4] In summary, experiential learning practices cannot be separated out or away from the way in which they work with, and ultimately shape, the re-presentation of experiential knowledge.

Consequently, it is important to explore how Theatre of the Oppressed works with and represents experience. Whether it is Forum Theatre, "the cop in the head" practices or "image theatre", the various Theatre of the Oppressed systems of practice reveal a consistent reliance on a playful upending and reworking of the conventional model of theatre. The passive observing spectator is replaced by an active intervening "spect-actor" who takes over the role of the protagonist and upsets all our normal expectations about the way in which theatre should work.

This change in form or style has important implications. Firstly, there is the way in which Theatre of the Oppressed seeks to re-focus theatre by making it participatory, critically reflective and ultimately educational. Secondly, the very nature of Theatre of the Oppressed suggests that by deploying the sensorial and aesthetic aspects of experience in specific ways, we can re-present ourselves and events differently and effectively learn from them.

Conway, (1998) the feminist writer and literary scholar, in a recently published exploration of the autobiographical "voice" of women, explores the literary significance of narrative forms and their capacity to shape and determine the scope of reflection. In the book entitled "When Memory Speaks", she critically reflects on the autobiographical point of view and draws attention to the capacity of the style of narrative forms to shape and define meaning.

She explains that:

"We all practice the craft of auto-biography in our inner conversations with ourselves about the meaning of our experience and those conversations, no matter what language we use, are fundamentally theological or philosophical. Though only a handful of us set about writing the results and publishing them for others to read, we are all autobiographers, but few of us give attention to the forms and tropes of culture through which we report ourselves to ourselves. Though they capture universals in human existence, these forms are not necessarily perfect expressions of our unique passages through time. So we should be wary of the psychological traps inherent in inherited modes of expression". [5]

Here Conway, (1998) like Boal, (1979) draws attention to the way in which the conventional genres and tropes upon which narration relies shape and implicitly invest our stories with meaning.

For this study her remarks are important, in so far as she observes that the way we recount and present experience has significant moral consequences that effectively determine what and how we learn. For Boal, in a similar vein, theatre is about the telling of stories and Theatre of the Oppressed is about learning through the appropriately developed dramatization of the stories we tell. Hence the very way in which we dramatize and re-present our stories is important.

Most importantly, Conway's (1998) work underlines the capacity of the forms of story telling to indicate the scope of personal and social agency. Here she illustrates the specific ways in which the form of autobiography re-presents the capacity of the self to act:

"Take the romance for example. The romantic heroine is someone who is acted upon, someone who responds to others, someone who is not the agent of her own destiny. Yet in reality we all make choices and manipulate others, though it is not part of the romantic life plot for the heroine to acknowledge what she's done. But agency unacknowledged even by the actor in question means a power for action not subject to moral constraints". [6]

Conway, (1998) like Boal, (1979) goes on to ground her observations within a broader historical terrain by explaining that:

"Western culture has cultivated the romantic heroine to a pre-eminent place in its governing myths, and, at least

until very recently, has regarded women as less morally developed than men, or less able to exercise abstract moral reasoning. But it's hard for someone who doesn't acknowledge agency even to herself, to reason very cogently about the morality of her actions". [7]

By citing the literary example of the romantic heroine, Conway (1998) demonstrates the influential role of form and its capacity to shape content and facilitate the emergence of meaning. It is clear from her comments that the way in which we tell us our stories are in and of themselves expressions of our capacity for agency. Conway concludes:

"Once we have acquiesced in concealing our agency from our-selves and others, we've lost our moral moorings."

[8]

I have quoted extensively from Conway (1998) because in addition to commenting on the critical significance of form she also explores the connections that link memory, autobiography, voice and agency. One of the main themes explored in the essays in *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal 1979) is the incapacity of the traditional and established forms of theatre to re-present experience in ways that effectively demonstrate a critical interrogation of memory, the autobiographical voice and agency.

Boal (1979) relates this failure to the pervasive influence of Aristotle's model of tragedy and what he sees as the consequent emergence of a neutralized and dis-empowered spectator.

[9]

This is the basis of Boal's search for an alternative form of theatre that represented the nationalist aspirations of Brazil in the 1960's and 1970's. More importantly, Boal (1979) sought to fashion theatre as a critical and reflective medium that was ultimately educational.

Theatre of the Oppressed demonstrates that through the process of drama we can re-present our experiences in forms that enable us to explore and delineate our moral moorings, as it were. Forum theatre and the "cop in the head" practices are examples of forms of theatre that enable us to reflect on, explore and creatively express our critical responses to the social conditions under which we live. In addition, the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices are specifically designed to promote the delineation of possibilities for social and political action. Here, drama and in a broader sense art, can be seen as instructive in so far as it fosters the exploration of the possibilities for moral action.

Theatre of the Oppressed demonstrates that we can learn to think and act differently from and through the practice of a form of theatre that seeks to politicize reflective practice and the related re-presentation of experience. Towards the end of his life Foucault began to explore and elaborate on his interpretation of the Greeks' understanding of aesthetics and its role in the cultivation of the values and ideals of a good life. (Foucault 1982)

It is this broader sense of art as a form of reflective social commentary that we need to turn to. This recognition of art and artistic sensibility shifts us away from more reductionist understandings of the instructive role of art. Instead Theatre of The Oppressed asks us to recognize the reflective and interrogative roles of the creative sensibilities.

In this sense, aesthetics refers to the visceral aspects of the creative engagement and emphasizes the capacity of art to work with the affective elements of experience and knowing. In the case of Theatre of the Oppressed, we are required to acknowledge that by shifting the boundaries that traditionally separate spectators and actors, the "spect-actor" is provided with the opportunity to become an artist, an imaginative creator of social reality. For example, in Forum Theatre, the "spect-actor" who takes over the stage by replacing the protagonist and actively experimenting with an imagined plan of action can create an alternative reality through this active form of dramatic deliberation, this engagement in the playful "as if" and "what if" readings of social reality.

It can be argued that at a certain level, this is an experiential re-learning, a demonstration of a form of situated cognition that goes to the very basis of what experiential learning is about. By taking over the stage the spect-actor asserts his or her right to playfully re-invent the established order of social reality.

This joking or re-invention of the dominant forms of theatre representation can be seen as being subversive and implicitly carnivalesque. In describing the Joker, Winston (1998) makes the following comment:

"The Joker is more a facilitator than a jester, his purpose is to engineer the subversion of socially and morally oppressive narratives by encouraging the audience to move from the position of passive spectators to more active spect-actors. As such one of the roles he adopts is that of the devil's advocate disturbing the spectators received values in order to challenge their thinking and empower them into enlightened forms of action." [10]

The objective of Theatre of the Oppressed is this challenging and exploration of the social and political implications of our received values. This is achieved by radically altering the established form of theatre and consequently demonstrating the educational implications of the critical re-presentation of experience. Joking enables us to playfully re-shape the world by asking why things are the way they are and what are the possibilities for the emergence and cultivation of social and political change.

It is not surprising that Boal (1979) saw his work as not only being connected to the social and political tradition established by Brecht but solidly grounded in contemporary Brazilian realities.

Boal explains:

"Bertolt Brecht reacts to the poetics (the poetics of virtu of Machiavelli) by taking the character theorized by Hegel as absolute subject and converting him back into an object. But now he is the object of social forces, not of the values of the super structures, social being determines thought not vice versa. What was lacking to complete the cycle was what was happening at present in Latin America - the destruction of the barriers created by the ruling classes. First the barrier between actors and spectators is destroyed all must act, all must be protagonist in the necessary transformation of society.

This is the process I describe in "Experiments with the Peoples Theatre in Peru". Then the barrier between the protagonist and the chorus is destroyed; all must be simultaneously chorus and protagonist: this is the Joker system. Thus we arrive at the Poetics of the Oppressed the conquest of the means of theatrical production". [11]

Here the interdependent nature of form, content and meaning is established. The emergence of "joking" in the early work of the Arena Theatre Company and its thematic development and elaboration in the context of popular street theatre is a demonstration of Boal's devotion to the cultivation of an expressive form that was instructional rather than merely entertaining.

The spect-actor is a subversive inversion of our normal expectations about the way theatre should be. We do not expect spectators to get up and become a part of the action. The spect-actor subverts the normative boundaries of theatre and openly participates. This action ritualizes the scope of theatre, removing it from its traditional role of spectacle. This fundamental change in form has important implications for the content and meaning of Theatre of the Oppressed and for its role as a medium of instruction.

In summary, the emergence of the participative spect-actor signals a shift from theatre as spectacle to theatre as ritual. Hence the role of the spectator as passive observer of the spectacle of theatre is replaced by that of active "spect-actor", an engaged participant in the ritual of theatre. The educational implications of this change are explored in the following section by drawing on an "interpretative" framework developed in the area of anthropology. It must be noted that this cross-disciplinary re-framing is a demonstration of the "illuminative projection" upon which the methodology of this study draws. [12]

8.2 Theatre of the Oppressed - From Spectacle To Ritual

As previously indicated, McLaren in *Schooling As Ritual Performance* (McLaren, 1993) specifically examines the way in which rituals are used in order to discipline action and impose conformity in the context of schooling. McLaren's study demonstrates the participative nature of rituals and their capacity to invest collective action with meaning. *Theatre of the Oppressed* raises important questions about the broader educational implications of rituals. The system of practices signal that the embodiment and the collective exploration of the material aspects of action are an important point of departure.

Handelman, (1997) in an article entitled *Rituals/Spectacles* offers a metalogic of ritual alongside a contrasting metalogic of spectacle. The point Handelman (1997) is seeking to make is that while rituals can define and emphasize the material dynamics and possibilities of action, spectacles are comparatively static re-presentations of experience. Hence rituals are more purposeful, self regulating and more effectively controlled by those who enact them. Handelman (1997) maintains that rituals are functionally emancipatory and highly reliant on their immediate context for interpretation and the imposition of meaning. This is not by any standard meant to be a definitive description of the nature and scope of rituals.

For a more detailed and elaborate examination of the significance of rituals in the context of Theatre in Education, we must turn our attention to the already mentioned work of McLaren (1993) and Courtney. (1997)

The preceding commentary sets rituals apart from spectacles and draws attention to the transformational implications of rituals and ritual practices. According to Handelman (1997) spectacles are more static presentations or performances of human action. Spectacles require our attention as observers rather than as participants and there always remains the distancing effect of our non-participation. A march past, a parade, a choreographed rehearsed public display these are good examples of spectacles. The spectators have little or no control over what is presented and the performance and re-presentation relies extensively on a pre-arranged pattern of action. Spectacles lack the participatory energy of rituals.

According to Handelman (1997) the visual involvement of the spectator is limited to the "play of images" and while these images may be seductive, they remain distant and passive:

"spectacles are that which show themselves to be spectacles, display themselves to view, little is seen to be hidden. They are declaratives sometimes imperatives but rarely interrogatives". [13]

On the basis of Handelman's (1997) explanatory comments it is easy to see how the vigorous and life enhancing energies of rituals can degenerate into passive spectacles. In instances where spectacles involve the demonstration of the creative and imaginative energies, the disciplinary regimes of the state can effectively colonize the aesthetic domain.

Handelman (1997) refers to:

"the statist search for an aesthetic that reflects and magnifies the precision and exactness of taxonomic divisions and combinations". [14]

Handelman (1997) cites the Rio Carnival as an ideal example of a statist controlled spectacle that reflects a "precision of inversion" and the state's implication in the "ultimate control" of the "participating body". It can be argued that Handelman's (1997) comments are directed at the festival at large rather than at its distinctive carnivalesque qualities. In essence his point is that rituals can lose their generative and transformational capacity and degenerate into spectacle if and when the participative elements are overly circumscribed and regulated. While ritual relies on a distinctive pattern of action much of its transformative efficacy is grounded in the capacity to frame agency in a participative context. For example, the ritual of marriage is meaningless if the bride and groom do not recognize, accept, participate and ultimately perform in the prescribed series of activities that transforms them from being single individuals into a husband and wife.

Much of Boal's theorizing in Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1979) focuses on his understanding of the way in which theatre has shifted away from its origins as a ritual to its contemporary form as "spectacle" .

In introducing the essay "Poetics of the Oppressed", Boal (1979) explains that the ritual implications of the theatre were historically usurped in ways that reflect the political values and ideological orientations of the dominant forms of social and political organization. Somewhat nostalgically he explains:

"In the beginning the theater was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theater and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separated actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch - the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonist from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began!

Now the Oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more are making the theatre their own. The walls must be torn down. First, the spectator starts acting again: invisible theater, forum theater, image Theatre, etc. Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate the private property of the characters by the individual actors: the "Joker" System". [15]

Hence the aim of Theatre of the Oppressed is to challenge the scope and nature of conventional theatre by promoting a shift that facilitates the emergence of the "dithyrambic" song: free people singing in the open air.

This signals a shift of theatre from a system that corresponds with Handelman's (1997) definitions of spectacle to a system that reflects his understanding of the transformative capacity of ritual. Boal (1979) consistently argues that in order to restore theatre to its role as ritual, we need to challenge the established conventions of contemporary genres. He suggests that this has to be a deliberate and conscious political undertaking.

From this perspective we can recognize a correspondence with Freire's (1972) delineation of the political nature of educational practices that address the need to promote forms of learning that facilitate the emergence of a critical subjectivity. By developing a radical form of theatre that brings to the fore the educational implications of the ritual components of action, the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices redefines performance by framing the scope of our critical gaze. We are able to look at our actions and the actions of others in the critical context of the "aesthetic space" of theatre.

For adult education practitioners this is a significant contribution as it invites them to identify and pay attention to the material and performative aspects of action. This reframes the process of knowing and suggests an epistemology of experience that corresponds with Dewey's observations about the structures of experience and their role in the process of apprehension.

For those of us whose work in the areas of education, training and personal development frequently demands the use of experiential practices, this epistemological framing of experience is useful. We can, through the theoretical contribution of Theatre of the Oppressed, think differently about knowing, knowledge, and the related process of cognition, particularly within the context of experiential learning. In addition, Boal's focus on the development of theatre based practices that specifically address the moral dimension of social learning extends and elaborates on our understanding of education by drawing attention to the significance of the aesthetic domain.

CHAPTER 9

Theatre of the Oppressed - The Joking Motif as A Mode of Critical Sensibility

9.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed And The Carnavalesque Aesthetic

"The goal of Theatre of the Oppressed is not then to create calm, equilibrium, but rather to create dis-equilibrium which prepares the way for action. Its goal is to dynamize. This dynamization, with the action that results from it (set off by one spect-actor in the name of all) destroys all blocks which prohibited the realization of actions such as this. That is, it purifies the spect-actors it produces a catharsis. The cartharsis of detrimental blocks! And very welcome it is too". [1]

It is the intention of this study to explore the educational implications of what can be defined as the "carnavalesque" aesthetic of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices. On this basis I wish to suggest that the Joker can be seen as a defining motif, one that shapes the distinctive "carnavalesque" critical sensibility of Theatre of the Oppressed. The Joker, and more effectively "joking" is an approach to problem posing and inquiry that works with the social dimension of action in order to promote moral learning. [2] Dewey's recognition of the educational implications of what he refers to as "moral artistry" is a significant contribution as it draws attention to the way in which the apprehension and exploration of moral dilemmas relies on the dynamic involvement of the creative sensibilities. [3]

More importantly, Dewey (1933) observes that it is by imagining that we can in the context of problem solving effectively pose and explore the "what if" and "as if" questions that are a fundamental component of the way we think about and resolve dilemmas. It is this speculative shifting between alternative and possible resolution scenarios that Dewey (1933) refers to as "moral artistry".

Against this background we can come to see the Joker as a metaphor for a particular conceptualization of "moral artistry". The Joker's multi-faceted nature and unpredictability suggests a playful and subversive critical sensibility that is ultimately educational in its focus. Joking seeks to represent experience through an innovative deployment of the imagination. In his descriptive review of the Joker as a stylistic device in the musical, *Arena Tells About Zumbi*, Boal (1979) effectively demonstrates the inventive capacity of the imagination. The Joker as a figure embodies the critical sensibility of the Theatre of the Oppressed and its radical possibilities.

As Boal explains:

"The Joker is a magical reality, he creates it. If necessary, he invents magic walls, combats, soldiers, armies. All the other characters accept the magic reality created and described by the Joker. To fight, he uses an invented weapon, to ride, he invents a horse, to kill himself, he believes in the dagger that does not exist.

The Joker is polyvariant, his function is the only one that can perform any role in play, being able even to replace the protagonist when the latter's realistic nature prevents him from doing something" [4]

Here the Joker is more than simply a character who serves the role of agent provocateur. The Joker can be seen as an embodiment, a concrete representation as it were, of the way in which a radical critical sensibility needs to deploy the plastic and the dichotomous properties of the aesthetic space.[5] The Joker is a symbol for the critical deployment of the imagination, a re-presentation that enables us to move beyond the confines of the immediate and perceived reality. This suggests a working beyond the boundaries of the known and accepted common sense understandings of social reality.

Boal explains:

"The outlook of the Joker actor must be that of author or adapter which is assumed to (go) beyond that of the other characters in time and space." [6]

Through the Joker, Boal (1979) explicitly draws attention to the capacity of theatre to move beyond the here and now of everyday and taken-for-granted assumptions about the social realities that define our understandings of the world and our place in it. Instead, using the "plastic" and dichotomous properties of the "aesthetic space" we are invited to openly engage in the creative re-invention and consequent re-presentation of the world and our role in it.

Boal (1979) rejects the theatre's traditional reliance on covert or hidden strategies that cloak authorial intentions. Rather, he challenges the traditional conventions of the theatre declaring that:

"In all the [theatre] techniques what is most objectionable to us is the camouflage with which the true intention is hidden. The functioning of the technique is concealed with embarrassment. We prefer the impudence of showing what it is and for what it is being used. The camouflage ends up creating a 'type' of character much closer to the other characters than to the spectator: choruses, narrators, etc. are inhabitants of fables and not of the society in which the spectators live". [7]

Broadly defined, Boal's intention is to create a theatre that is devoted to the exploration of dilemmas that are grounded in real themes. It is a theatre that overtly seeks to instruct within and through the process of drama. Hence "joking" is explicitly directive, in so far as it is grounded in a specific ideological framework, one that aims to raise ethical and moral questions about the inequalities that define the nature of the prevailing social and economic order. The Joker embodies a collective interrogative voice, this is demonstrated in the *Arena Tells About Zumbi* (Boal 1979) where the Joker frequently interprets the action in order to provide guidance and to make clear the lessons the performance was seeking to convey. [8]

As Boal (1979) indicates:

"The explanations are given periodically and are designed to make the performance develop on two different and complimentary levels: that of the fable (which can use all the conventional imaginative resources of the theatre) and that of the "lecture" in which the Joker becomes the "exegete" [9]

The Joker takes the role of analyst, director and narrator-in-chief. According to Boal (1979) the last part of the performance consists of an "exhortation" in which the Joker seeks to "incite" the audience in accordance with the themes that have been dealt with in the play. In Forum theatre it is the Joker who reviews the improvisation after its first presentation. She or he is the one who draws the spectators' attention to the key themes and encourages the spect-actors to come forward and replace the protagonist. [10] This conceptualization of the Joker as narrator, explicator and general all round raconteur corresponds with the playful and subversive image of the archetypal "trickster" figure, a common critical voice in the folklore traditions of new world societies. (Lorde, 1984; Gates, 1988)

As educators, it is worthwhile establishing and thinking about ways in which we can work beyond the confines of objectivist and positivist assumptions about the "a priori nature" of social reality.

The Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices clearly demonstrate a constructivist orientation. [11] Hence in its quest for an alternative delineation of "truths" that are grounded in moral and ethical considerations, Theatre Of The Oppressed requires that we work with a critical sensibility that is fundamentally creative in its operation. This means that in the rejection of prevailing understandings of social truths we fashion alternative moral and ethical understandings of the possibilities for social action. These understandings draw on the inspirational energies of imagined "otherness".

For example, in working towards the development and emergence of theories and practices that are grounded in multi-cultural perspectives we need to imaginatively step away from the boundaries that constrain prevailing apprehensions of the scope and nature of social relations. This requires the effective deployment of a critical and imaginative sensibility that grasps the significance of the "social" nature of popular constructions of categories like race and gender. Learning of and learning about alternative ways of conceptualizing these socially constructed categories requires both learning and "unlearning". [12]

It can be argued that if we are to engage in the kind of critical reflection that promotes this learning and "unlearning" we need to work with experiential knowledge and its structures imaginatively.

This is what Theatre of the Oppressed seeks to do, the "plastic" nature of the aesthetic space works with memory in ways that help us to creatively imagine alternative possibilities. The "dichotomous" quality of the aesthetic space can help us to see and experience ourselves behaving differently. The teleological focus of the aesthetic space can help us to choreograph the transition from our present understanding of social reality to the development of the appropriate pre-disposition for change. [13]

It is clear that the joking motif suggests a sensibility that is primarily transformative in its orientation.

As Boal explains:

"..all theoretical possibilities are conferred on the "Joker" function; he is magical, omniscient, polymorphous and ubiquitous. On stage he functions as a master of ceremonies, raisonneur, kurogo, etc., He makes all the explanations, verified in the structure of the performance, and when necessary, he can be assisted by the coryphaeus or the choral orchestra. [14]

Simultaneously and in somewhat of a contradiction of his overarching powers and influence the Joker is also the "everyman" figure.

Boal explains that:

"We propose a 'Joker' who is a contemporary and neighbor of the spectator. For this it is necessary to restrict his 'explanations'; it is necessary to move him away from the other characters, to bring him closer to the spectators." [15]

From this perspective, the Joker's gate-keeping function is crucial, and the role can be seen as the symbolic representation of the boundary that separates the reality of the everyday world from that of the "as if" and "what if" of the dramatic sphere of existence. If we are to extend our understanding of experiential learning practices in ways that explicitly incorporate the aesthetic dimension of experience it is important to consider how we go about working within this alternative sphere and the critical role of the imagination. The Joker figure can be seen as an embodiment of a critically grounded imagination at work, relating the way we see reality to the imaginative possibilities.

9.2 Joking As A Carnavalesque Critical Sensibility

As previously explained, in the context of Forum, the Joker is the spectator's initial connection with the action. In this capacity the Joker operates as the gate keeper, the enabler and the facilitator who encourages and promotes the critical transition from passive spectator to active "spect-actor". The Joker is an important and key function in the interrogation of the dramatic re-presentation of experience. His role is made particularly significant by his ability to smoothly cross stylistic genres and categories. In this sense "Joking" is a reflective and interrogative device that demonstrates a distinctly "carnavalesque" sensibility

While it is difficult to prove that Boal modeled Theatre of the Oppressed on the well known carnival festival of his homeland Brazil, it is easy to relate Theatre of the Oppressed to a broader new world cultural literary landscape that is defined by carnivalesque motifs. It is the intention of this study to examine the educational significance of the carnivalesque sensibility that shapes Theatre of the Oppressed. As previously noted in the literature review of this study, the work of new world writers and artists like Naipaul, (1962) Walcott, (1970) Harris, (1985; 1986; 1988) Lovelace, (1989; 1997) and Hill, (1972) are suffused with carnivalesque motifs and tropes.

In discussing the scope and nature of post colonial drama in the new world, Gilbert and Tompkins, (1996) underline the importance of carnival related tropes and archetypes and the implications of a critical sensibility that is grounded in a carnivalesque aesthetic.

Both Gilbert and Tompkins (1996) and Alleyne Dettmers (1995) explore the subversive implications of a carnivalesque aesthetic and its contrary celebration of upheaval, inversion and counter hegemonic impulses. This does not mean that all new world carnival celebrations are entirely anti-authoritarian and solely devoted to disruptive re-presentations of the social conventions and dominant assumptions about the scope and nature of social reality. Quite the contrary, many of the new world carnivals have become the institutionalized, statist spectacles referred to by Handelman. (1997) None the less it can be asserted that the impulses that shape these new world expressions of the carnivalesque can be related to popular counter cultural celebrations of the material body released from the normative disciplines of labor and social surveillance.

Hence carnival and the related carnivalesque aesthetic can be seen as a celebratory and emancipatory trope. According to Gash, (1993) and Dentith, (1995) in his commentary on Bakhtin's carnival, the festivals can provide an organizing image that contradicts and problematizes normal and everyday ways of experiencing prevailing social reality and its practices.

Consequently, the educational promise of the carnivalesque is its capacity to subvert established conventions and offer the possibility of imagining and exploring regenerative and empowering visions of change.

The Joker is the embodiment of the carnivalesque aesthetic, an expression of the new world critical sensibility Boal (1979) sought to capture and give voice to during his early period of experimentation with Arena Theatre Company. This does not mean that the carnivalesque is an exclusively new world approach to social commentary. Bakhtin, (1984) elaborates at length on the symbolic significance of sixteenth century carnivals and their re-presentation of what he refers to as "grotesque realism". Here Bakhtin (1984) seeks to draw attention to the ways in which the carnivalesque aesthetic specifically embraces and celebrates the material body. The point he makes is that the often bawdy and vulgar material presentation of the body re-frames and satirizes that which is accepted as normal. In this sense the carnivalesque has historically offered popular and playful parodies of social reality as we know it.

The celebratory and playful subversion of social boundaries is a common feature occurring in a variety of social settings, serving a critical and implicitly educational purpose. As previously indicated, Guingane (1997) explains that in Mali, Koteba is a form of folk theatre organized once a year to give young people a chance to criticize their elders.

Everything said in this form of theatre is beyond the law. He also draws attention to the way in which in Burkina Faso certain Mossi societies held a market at night time once a year. This event provided opportunities for the playful acting out of socially unacceptable behaviors.

During the night in question all established rules especially sexual taboos are consigned to limbo and a person could go with a person he or she had dreamed of all year long, even the wife or husband of a close relative. When dawn comes however everything returns to normal. Guingane (1997) goes on to conclude that:

"These two examples are interesting because they can be considered as forms of play of social dramatization or dramatization. The protagonists were aware that they were acting because they knew that at a specific moment the rules would change again." [16]

These examples illustrate the way in which playful and imaginative engagement can turn the world inside out and upside down and provide the opportunity for making and exploring social statements that are subversive and contradict the established norms of social reality. The imagination energizes these subversive possibilities. From this perspective, carnivalesque modes of re-presentation and expression provide the opportunity to engage in subversive representations of social reality that are, I would like to suggest, ultimately educational.

Not only can we imagine ourselves to be other than the way we are, we can creatively challenge existing representations by replacing them with empowering alternatives. In this sense, the carnivalesque is a particular form of creative expression, that celebrates the capacity to subvert.

The imagination creatively negotiates the tension between the concrete reality of the present and the playfully imagined possibilities that are, as it were "joked" into existence within the context of drama. Hornbrook, (1998) whose work focuses on drama curriculum development for secondary schools, comments at length on the capacity of art to work with the tensions that define the boundaries that separate the real and the possible. His contribution is important here as he carefully delineates the educational implications of the dramatic arts by emphasizing our inability to totally step out and away from our understandings of the world as we know it.

For example, we cannot imagine events and situations that are completely outside of our knowledge of our existence. Hornbrook (1998) argues that we are, in a sense imaginatively constrained by the social worlds we inhabit. Yet, we can move to the edges as it were of our present perception of reality. It is on this marginal terrain that the imagination grounds its oppositional apprehension of "otherness". The playful engagement with "otherness", especially forbidden and unconventional representations of "otherness" relies on the sensibilities.

Art and artistic modes of expression can serve as critical frameworks within which the dominant social arrangements and practices are presented, interrogated and questioned. From this perspective art is a mode of inquiry that is educational in so far as it promotes forms of engagement that rely on the symbolic re-presentation and exploration of social reality.

CHAPTER 10

Experiential Learning - Towards A Conceptual Elaboration

10.1 Experiential Learning - Towards A Conceptual Elaboration

It is important that the final chapter of this study raise and address the questions that initially informed the overall direction of this inquiry. As adult education practitioners how can we think about and make sense of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices within the context of experiential learning and what are the implications for our understanding of the educational significance of the aesthetic domain? Having demonstrated in the preceding chapters the ways in which the Theatre of the Oppressed elaborates on and extends everyday accounts of experiential learning practice, we can turn our attention in the closing chapter to the promised conceptual elaboration of experiential learning.

It is quite clear that the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices with its reliance on the process of drama as its primary means of communication invites us to broaden our conceptualization of experience. As adult education practitioners we are also required to think about how we work with experience and the range of practices that we bring to the classroom, the lecture theatre or the training and development environments in which we seek to promote learning. More importantly, by exploring the properties of the "aesthetic space", the study has drawn attention to the way in which the affective domain shapes and influences the social dimension of learning.

This study has contributed to the development of understanding on two fronts. On one hand it has brought to the fore the educational significance of the aesthetic domain and the related need to conceptualize and work with experience in ways that take this into account. On the other hand, the study has established that the recognition of the aesthetic component of experience is an important requirement of activities that seek to promote moral agency in the context of social learning. Hence, in this closing chapter, I shall seek to demonstrate the ways in which an interpretative consideration of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices encourages an elaboration of traditional conceptualizations of experiential learning.

It must be noted that I am not seeking to replace established assumptions about the nature of experience and experiential learning. Rather I am suggesting that when we facilitate forms of social learning that aim to promote the consideration of the moral dimension of human action, we may find it useful to conceptualize experience in ways that incorporate an acknowledgment of the aesthetic dimension of experience. In pursuit of this broader understanding of experiential learning, the following sections of this chapter will comment and elaborate on the conceptual dimensions of experience that were previously outlined in this study. [1]

10.1.1 Experiential Knowledge As Being Multi-dimensional

A consideration of Theatre of the Oppressed, and its reliance on the process of improvisational drama as an instructional medium, clearly directs us towards an elaboration of our understandings of experiential knowledge. The preceding analysis of Theatre of the Oppressed encourages us to effectively conceptualize experiential knowledge in ways that openly acknowledge the educational significance of the aesthetic domain. It is not difficult to understand why a substantial portion of the literature on experiential learning focuses on the mechanics and the management of practice.

While there has been a recent tendency to ask contributors, writers and theorists in the area to support their descriptions of practice with "experiential" examples of practice very little, attention has been given to actually explaining how the dynamics of experience and experiential approaches to "knowing" work. In a sense, this leaves the way open for the uncritical acceptance of taken for granted assumptions about the nature of experience. As previously explained throughout this study, Dewey's delineation of experience focuses on the transactional adaptation of organisms to their environment. This provides an explanatory touch point that helps us to make sense of the way in which experiential structures shape and define apprehension and perception.

Within this philosophical framework about the nature of experience, it is possible to understand how Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed practices have extended and refined Freire's (1972) interpretation of "conscientization" by explicitly working with the aesthetic dimension of experience. On this basis, we can develop a broader understanding of experience that incorporates and recognizes the facilitative role the affective domain plays in the promotion of apprehension and consequently learning.

As indicated in this study, the specific educational terrain addressed by the work of both Boal (1979) and Freire (1972) is the social dimension of learning and their primary concern, like that expressed by Dewey, is with the cultivation of the competencies required for the conduct of what can be referred to as "moral artistry". [2] It can be asserted that this clearly requires a recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of experience and the educational value of these various dimensions. It is quite clear that Theatre of the Oppressed, as Boal explicitly states, works towards the realization of specific pedagogical ideals. The practices are grounded in the assumption that learners can forge and shape meaning from experience in the practical context of improvisational drama.

On the stage the spect-actor who participates in Forum Theatre wishes to discover, to find out, how can I resolve this dilemma in a way that allows me to act effectively?

In the case of the "cop in the head" exercises, the spect-actor is also concerned with finding out how can I act so that I "feel" better? Because of the specific ideological focus of the Theatre of the Oppressed models of practice, the resolution of dilemmas is explicitly related to the cultivation and development of broader moral and ethical considerations. Hence, at a fundamental level, the educational questions become more profound and in a sense more complex. How can I resolve this dilemma in a way that is both personally and socially satisfactory? This question is considered from both the individual and collective perspectives. Consequently, the resolution requires an interrogative working out and working through of the problem with people who have experienced similar conditions.

Theatre of the Oppressed practices address both the intellectual and affective levels of experience in a way that clearly demonstrates the inter-dependence of these domains. The "cop in the head" practices show how it is that we often think we know what needs to be done but we do not possess the matching emotional commitment required for the corresponding action. This observation suggests that we need to actually learn how to "act out" our morally informed and grounded convictions. Here I am suggesting that we may often actually recognize "the right thing to do" but somehow fail to translate this propositional and intellectual understanding into concrete action.

This may be because we are required to break the pattern of habits that have historically shaped our social practices. For example, we may think we sincerely want to challenge an unfair practice in the work place but when the opportunity actually presents itself we may find that we avoid taking effective action as we are unable to actually act differently and to cope with the emotional and social consequences. By experimenting within the context of the theatre, we may develop the emotional disposition required to change the pattern of habits that sustain our inadequate responses to the problem. Theatre of the Oppressed works with the affective structures of experience in ways that playfully challenge established patterns of behavior. The aim is to develop alternative and empowering frames of action that are grounded in moral and ethical considerations.

As previously explained in this study, the "cop in the head" practices work on the interior of action, analyzing and exploring the internal restraints that often hold us back. By opening up and working with the social dimension of learning through the process of drama, the Theatre of the Oppressed practices demonstrate the ways in which both our imagination and our feelings mediate experience. Hence they need to be addressed as features of experiential knowledge. These imaginative and feeling components of experience are not static but are evolving structures.

In the context of experiential learning these dynamic structures can be activated and extended to creatively determine the scope and parameters of our opportunities for action and the crafting of agendas for social agency.

Against this background it is counter productive to believe that one can foster social learning by offering an instructive list of behavioral guidelines. In order to convey the moral and ethical knowledge required for shaping the effective exercise of social agency, the facilitation of the social dimension of learning requires a more qualitative approach to instruction. This approach should explicitly cultivate the speculative involvement of the imagination and the emotions. Hence, for effective social learning that is not tied to a deadening and counter productive didactic litany of precepts, we need to cultivate pedagogies that enable learners to creatively imagine how things could and should be.

Dewey (1933) refers to this playful process of deliberation as dramatic rehearsal, the imaginative entering into of various alternative responses to resolving dilemmas. It is this qualitative mode of deliberation that the Theatre of the Oppressed facilitates in the context of improvisational drama. Winston (1998) explains that the "thick" moral and ethical concepts about how we should behave and what we should do in the face of social dilemmas needs to be conveyed through a corresponding instructional medium that addresses the multiple intellectual

and sensorial levels of apprehension. This is the main educational accomplishment of Theatre of the Oppressed.

For adult education practitioners this is an important contribution that draws attention to the facilitative role of the aesthetic domain of experience. Hence Theatre of the Oppressed makes us elaborate and extend on our everyday delineations of the nature and scope of experiential knowledge. We are forced to conceptualize experience and experiential knowledge differently. Consequently, we are required to take note of Dewey's instructive observation that it is the role of educators to fund experience in ways that enrich the process of inquiry and the consequent generation of knowledge. This means that an acknowledgment of the multi-dimensional nature of experience and the facilitative role of the aesthetic domain requires an engagement in appropriate 'funding' activities. From this perspective, the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices serves as an illuminative framework that facilitates the recognition of the educational value of the multi-dimensional nature of experiential knowledge.

10.1.2 Cognition as Thinking

Theatre of the Oppressed draws extensively on the performative and kinesthetic dimensions of experience. By exploring, working with and presenting the material body as an expressive and communicative site of meaning, "image theatre" raises the possibility of considering a mind-body understanding of the nature of apprehension. "Image theatre" and its related practices invites us to elaborate on and extend experiential learning's pre-occupation with locating learning in the context of doing. Mark Johnson (1987) suggests that meaning, understanding, rationality and the imaginative structures of meaning arise from and are conditioned by the patterns of our bodily experience.

As previously outlined in this study, Mark Johnson's (1987) work offers a distinctive reworking and refinement of Dewey's account of cognition. By focusing on the performative elements of action and examining their implications for cognition, Mark Johnson's (1987) philosophical exploration of cognition locates "the body in the mind". This challenges traditional "mind in the body" assumptions. Hence we can make sense of the ways in which Boal uses theatre as a primarily aesthetic experience that promotes cognition by working with the body to facilitate material re-presentations of experience. In revisiting and revising our common sense explanations of the nature of cognition, we are effectively extending the established perceptions of the scope and nature of experiential learning.

Theatre of the Oppressed invites us to develop a more holistic understanding of cognition, one that focuses on thinking. As previously explained, this provides the opportunity to consider the role of the affective domain in the process of thinking. It is clear that the demonstration of feelings is a central requirement of theatre. On the stage we act through feelings, as Boal, (1995) explains, passion is a central component of theatre. Our bodies move, we say things, we communicate. It is the feeling component of experience that energizes and makes real the actions that are presented and dramatized in the context of the "aesthetic space".

From this perspective, drama facilitates the emergence of a kind of emotionally charged thinking, hence within the "aesthetic space" we are moved towards dramatically charged resolutions of dilemmas that are re-presented, interrogated and resolved on the stage. I would like to suggest that this differs from our common-sense understandings of the nature and scope of thinking. We often develop conceptualizations of "thinking" as being primarily abstract and logical in its operations. There is very little scope for the recognition of the influential role of the affective or the feeling dimension in this understanding of thinking. Hence although we may acknowledge the affective and imaginative domains they are seen as influential rather than structural components in the process of thinking. It is on the basis of this tendency that we frequently locate thinking outside of experiencing. (Holder, 1995)

Thinking is popularly understood as something that is done from above and beyond the matter of fact transactions of day-to-day experience. Here I wish to argue that thinking and more specifically cognition should be located within experience.

As previously outlined in this study, Dewey (1933) explains that organisms are embedded in experience. More specifically, he argues that as long as we are alive, we are to a greater or lesser extent simultaneously conducting a range of transactions with our environments. Dewey makes a distinction between the background and foreground features of experience, delegating the latter with the capacity to infuse our thinking with emotion and the former with the attributes required to shape, structure, direct and focus thought in the more analytical sense that is traditionally associated with thinking. Hence we know we are faced with a problem because we actually feel perplexed, confused or uncertain, it is our emotional response that helps us to recognize how we need to direct our attention in order to work towards a resolution.

Against this background we can see how the capacity of the "aesthetic space" to intensify and focus our emotional engagement with action provides the opportunity to directly work with the affective background features of experience. Hence thinking involves the emotions, the imagination and as Boal would say the passions. This means that in order for real social learning to occur we need to effectively problematize the current

situation and imaginatively engage in the exploration of possible resolutions. As previously explained, Dewey (1933) refers to this form of mental deliberation as dramatic rehearsal and suggests that this problem solving mode of thinking requires the critical and active deployment of the imagination in order to configure, re-configure and explore a range of "what if?" projections and scenarios. For Dewey (1933) this playful interrogation of ideas is a natural faculty and it is the role of educators to fund, develop and enrich the process.

It is against this background that Theatre of the Oppressed can be seen as a theatre based instructive practice that steps beyond our everyday understandings of cognition by working with the "image schema" that constitute the background structures of experience. Mark Johnson (1987) explains that:

"...in order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be a pattern and order in our actions, perceptions and conceptions. A schema is a recurrent pattern, shape, and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering activities. These patterns emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our personal interactions". [3]

I would like to suggest that shifts in these patterns can precede actual shifts in perception. As these are the structures that underlie habits, it is fair to speculate that by creatively working with our "image schema" we can re-frame our perceptions.

Mark Johnson's (1987) contribution is invaluable in so far as it connects the acquisition and development of "image schema" to both the materiality of the body and the imagination. From this perspective "image theatre" is a way of working with this connection in order to promote learning.

Consequently, the defining critical sensibilities of "joking" serves as a framework for working with and thinking about experiential knowledge. In developing an understanding of cognition as thinking, we are forced to locate cognition within a multi-dimensional conceptualization of experience. The consequent recognition of the defining role of the imaginative and affective domains effectively reworks everyday understandings of the scope and nature of apprehension. More importantly, in addition to providing this interpretative focus, Theatre of the Oppressed brings to the fore the facilitative, and consequently, educational implications of the aesthetic dimension of experience.

10.1.3 Joking As A Constructivist Teaching Practice

The Theatre of the Oppressed models of practice democratize the theatre by activating the spectator and throwing the stage open to the performing spect-actor who in the context of the dramatic process explores the possibility of acting and implicitly thinking differently. By joking, the conventions and practices of the theatre, spect-actors are able to act differently in order to resolve clearly delineated problems. It is important to locate Theatre of the Oppressed within what can be seen as a broad interpretation of constructivist teaching practices. By placing it in this context, we can come to understand the educational significance of Boal's use of the theatre to interrogate and explore individual and collective moments of transformative empowerment. Through Forum Theatre and the "cop in the head" techniques spect-actors are able to ask why things are the way they are; in addition, they can also at a material level, experience the transformative process of knowing things differently.

This study asserts that the Theatre of the Oppressed practices deploy a "carnavalesque" aesthetic that is both critical and subversive. [4] A certain permission or a license to question, to challenge and interrogate established conventions is part of the general ethos of Theatre of the Oppressed. The "Joking" motif and the related carnivalesque aesthetics provide a distinctive critical sensibility that is effectively constructivist in its orientation.

The Rituals and Masks practices are excellent examples of "image theatre" in which the serious social roles that symbolize order and control are materially de-constructed in the context of theatre. [5] The overall effect is to hold up established social practices for critical evaluation by provoking satire and promoting ridicule.

This playful approach to engaging in critical social commentary relies on the creative and subversive re-arrangement of familiar symbols and their meanings. The playful engagement with "otherness" is both energizing and informative, in so far as one is shifted away from everyday understandings and meanings of social reality. More importantly, the enactment of "otherness" can foster the emergence and imaginative presentation of radical alternative "images". These enactments are material representations and can be seen as modes and patterns of resistance that are effectively transformative and empowering for those who work with them. This approach to the critical delineation and exploration of social practices extends the conceptual terrain of constructivist teaching practices.

In explaining the importance of "moral deliberation". Dewey (1933) calls attention to the way in which, when confronted with a dilemma we imaginatively work backwards and forwards experimenting with, and calling up, a broad range of possible outcomes. Theatre of the Oppressed can be seen as a material embodiment of this process of moral deliberation.

The spect-actor in the role of the protagonist seeks to resolve the central dilemma of the improvisation by acting out this suggestion or that resolution, by sculpting this image or altering that image. This means that we can experience the illuminative and cathartic impact of an appropriate resolution even though we are not in the midst of the actual experience. This is a form of the "moral artistry" referred to by Dewey. This particular interpretation of constructivist teaching practices emphasizes the creative, imaginative and sensorial aspects of thinking and acting differently.

In *Teachers as Intellectuals*, Giroux (1988) writes at length about the social implications of oppressive cultural practices. In exploring the role of education in the development of the ideological orientation required for effective resistance, he argues that education should provide the terrain for the emergence of a radical critical vernacular. Hence Giroux (1988) asserts the intellectual role of teachers involves challenging the established regimes of truth that sustain prevailing ideologies of oppression. Teaching therefore becomes an emancipatory practice and transformative intellectuals are committed to developing and enhancing the quality of human life.

This is a radical reading of the role of education and the scope of teaching practices. The underlying implication is that teachers ought to be engaged in the making of meanings.

Yet the task of "meaning making" is not always as straightforward as it may appear. I would like to suggest that the facilitation of the development of "conscientization" presents some difficulties. The limitations of the language of theory as a medium of communication for exploring socially constructed differences like race and class has been explored at length in this study. [6] By working within the context of the theatre and by using the medium of drama, Theatre of the Oppressed extends the scope of constructivist teaching practices. Hence we can re-present and explore the social and cultural basis of constructions of race and class in ways that go beyond the constraints of everyday and common-sense understandings.

As previously explained, Theatre of the Oppressed can be seen as a form of dramatic rehearsal. Within the context of "image theatre" both the imagination and the emotions play key roles as spect-actors are encouraged to explore various constructions of what is possible and the related implications. Here we clearly move beyond a model of instruction that is fundamentally concerned with imparting information, instead we have a critical deployment of reflection that encourages a broader consideration of values. Theatre of the Oppressed is of particular significance because it challenges the ways in which we have traditionally conceptualized and made sense of the world.

It is against this background that we can conclude that Theatre of the Oppressed provides us with a framework for creatively re-thinking the scope of constructivist teaching practices in the context of experiential learning. If we see Theatre of the Oppressed as a mode of dramatic rehearsal that fosters and sustains a distinctive practice of deliberation, then it is not difficult to recognize the role of a critical sensibility that is carnivalesque in its orientation.

The carnivalesque qualities of the "joking" motif offer the possibility of re-presenting the way things are by providing the opportunity to create imaginative and subversive alternatives of the way things could be. At a conceptual level, this implies that we can elaborate and extend on our understanding of constructivist teaching practices by taking into account the way in which the process of drama facilitates and promotes a particular approach to the conduct of critical deliberation. The performative focus of Theatre of the Oppressed illuminates prevailing understandings of experiential learning by demonstrating an alternative and in some ways radical interpretation of constructivist teaching practice.

10.1.4 Reflective Practice As Working With Memory

In conceptualizing experiential learning it was made clear that reflective practices work with memory in order to re-present and explore experience. [7] More importantly, it was suggested that reflective practices make assumptions about the nature of memory. This assertion can be directly related to this study's delineation of the way in which narrative forms shape meaning. [7] In summary, the way in which we tell our stories about ourselves is as significant as the content of the stories. "Image Theatre", the discursive mode of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices, demonstrates that experience can be materially re-presented in ways that generate and map counter memory. [9]

Most Forum Theatre and "cop in the head" improvisations are based on clusters of auto-biographical images that are drawn from memory. During the preliminary preparation phase, the bodies of spect-actors are silently arranged in tableaux that represent the various dilemmas that are being explored. Usually these tableaux are activated with minimal or no verbal communication. The re-presentative sculpting of specific events or mental states is the starting point for action, the improvisation flows out of both the personal and collective memory of the spect-actors.

This is a clear example of the "joking" of the memory; the excavating of autobiography in ways that challenge the dominance of linear approaches to the recall and re-presentation of experience. In addition to raising questions about the role of memory in the context of experiential learning, the system of theater based practices draws attention to the capacity of the imagination and the creative sensibilities to shape the way in which we work with memory in order to facilitate learning.

In developing an understanding of how the Theatre of the Oppressed practices encourage us to radically re-conceptualize reflection, we need to think about and understand how image theatre re-presents and works with memory. I would like to suggest that the Lukasa, a mnemonic device, used by the Luba people of Central Africa, can serve as a descriptive metaphor that conveys the qualitative texture of the manner in which the Theatre of the Oppressed offers an alternative reading of the nature and scope of memory. This understanding of memory is somewhat radical and counters dominant understandings. [10]

Roberts and Roberts (1996) explain the ritual and cultural significance of the Lukasa. Their work in this area is an illustrative account of an approach to defining memory as "place". This suggests a spatial reading of the nature and operational style of memory that is grounded in a material approach to the process of retrieval.

This is an important point of departure for thinking about and making sense of the material and bodily focus of Theatre of the Oppressed.

Nooter Roberts and Roberts (1996) explain that the Luba people use the Lukasa as a mnemonic device to record and recount the social and political history of the group. The Lukasa itself is usually a multi-dimensional figurine or statue. The flat surface is carefully dotted with color coded memory pegs that represent and signal noteworthy events. Of course as a mnemonic device the color coding is symbolically charged and designed to convey specific meanings. On this basis we can come to regard the Lukasa as a text. By using the Lukasa as an illustrative reference, it is possible to challenge orthodox understandings of how memory works and its role in the processing and re-presentation of experience. [10]

It is widely assumed that the established way in which we recall and present prior knowing is based on our natural capacity to accumulate and retain information. We believe that our narrative accounts of the things that have happened and past events are reasonably faithful re-presentations of our memory of prior experience. It may be more accurate to regard memory as being, somewhat incoherent, primarily spatial, and more of a multi-dimensional repository of traces and related images of reality that are infused with emotionally charged meanings and resonances.

The Lukasa works on the assumption that memory is spatial rather than linear. Events are therefore spatially mapped according to their corresponding associations and connections.

This has important implications for the methods that the Luba use to recall and present the information that is coded onto the Lukasa. The board and its elaborate coding system is a living history of the group's achievements, the births and the deaths, the marriages, the wars, the famines and the times of plenty. These events are "read" by the community griot on ceremonial occasions. According to Nooter Roberts and Roberts (1996) no two readings of the Lukasa are the same, defining variables like time, place and setting determine how the Lukasa is read and the meanings that are given to events. Hence the board serves as a source of shifting readings of social reality.

The Lukasa works with memory in ways that challenge our linear based interpretations of the way in which we make sense of events and situations. The physical contours of a labyrinth can serve as an architectural metaphor that conveys an understanding of this alternative language and reading of the nature and scope of memory. From this perspective, we can graphically conceive of an anthropology of memory that recognizes past experience as being mapped over passage ways, corridors, and connecting rooms. This interpretation of the nature and scope of memory

compliments Mark Johnson's (1987) previously explored understanding of the structural role of the "image schemata" that shape and define his material re-alignment of the process of cognition. On the basis of this material delineation of cognition we can develop an understanding of reflective practices that work with the "image schema" that sustains the habits in which social practices are grounded. Here I am seeking to draw attention to the capacity of "image theatre" to operate as a discursive medium outside the constraints of every day language [11]

From this perspective, memory can be regarded as multi-dimensional repositories of meaning incorporating a full range of experiential structures that relate to feeling sensations, sounds, tastes and visuals cues. I am not suggesting here that memory should be perceived as a receptacle into which random items are deposited for retrieval. Rather it may be more appropriate to suggest that memory relies on a multi-layered mapping system that is primarily spatial and non linear. It is against this background that we can come to see image theatre as a spatially orientated and non-linear approach to working with experience.

It can be argued that the use of linear narrative approaches to the presentation of events and consequently experience is a social rather than a natural adaptation to explaining social reality. In other words, the expressive device of language imposes particular social and implicitly political patterns on

experience that can restrict and confine meaning.

This is the focus of Conway's exploration of women and the autobiographical mode of story telling. [12]

In some ways, art is often an expressive defiance of this social and political structuring of narrative forms. Many modes of artistic and creative expression seek to escape from the oppressive restrictions of linearity and shift towards working with the flowing labyrinth like structures of memory. Artistic forms of expressions like poetry and painting are to some extent attempts to escape the dominant narrative structures of everyday discourse.

Moving on from this, it can be argued that the very way in which we structure the interrogation of memory defines the scope of what we come to accept as experience. This corresponds with Boal's observations about the critical significance of the forms and conventions of theatre and their impact on the way in which we come to understand and make sense of the constructions of social reality that are offered. The importance of mining past experience and prior knowledge in ways that facilitate the emergence of counter memory was identified in this study as a point of critical departure, one that can help us re-frame our experience and the knowledge that emerges from it.

The Lukasa is a significant metaphor in so far as it allows us to think about memory, experience and knowledge in ways that

are set apart from the common sense and everyday understandings. If we can come to recognize that there are alternative ways of thinking about memory and the sensorial mapping of knowing then we can become less dependent on and more critical of the everyday linear modes of narration and recall.

From this perspective, Theatre of the Oppressed, particularly "image theatre" operates as a liberating and emancipatory medium. In normal everyday discourse we are required to tell our stories in a straightforward way; digressions, stream of consciousness connections and instructive asides are usually seen as confusing and disruptive. In sharp contrast the Lukasa, in operating as a mnemonic device, serves as an aid to memory and a provider of broad pointers or indications of significant events. As the Lukasa is decoded afresh with each telling or recounting, the shape, structure and form of the narrative relies on the discretionary power of the narrator and the collective responses of the audience.

In a way, this corresponds with the carnivalesque sensibility that defines Theatre of the Oppressed. The playful "joker" subverts, changes, questions and challenges the normal order of events. As previously explained, Joking is energized by the creative impulses that suffuse the "aesthetic space". Within the context of Theatre of the Oppressed, the imaginative telling and recounting of experience is a collective undertaking and a celebratory representation of subversive possibilities that

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draws on memory in ways that challenge everyday assumptions about the nature of the processes underlying the recall and re-presentation of experience. From this perspective, the Theatre of Oppressed system of practices provides an instructive illumination of the scope and nature of critical reflection. This, of course, extends and elaborates on established understandings of reflective practice in the context of experiential learning.

AN END NOTE - CLOSING COMMENTS

For adult education practitioners who are working towards the development of holistic understandings of education and their own particular roles as practitioners, this reflective consideration of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices in the context of experiential learning could be seen as a significant point of departure. The parameters of this study have served as a descriptive, discursive and ultimately an innovative interpretative framework from which important contributions to the area of experiential learning have been made. It can be concluded that through a theatre based system of drama practices Boal (1979; 1995) has developed an approach to working with experience that encourages us to broaden our conceptual interpretation of experiential learning and ultimately our understandings of educational practice.

In drawing attention to the educational significance of the aesthetic domain of experience and the epistemological implications of a critical sensibility that is grounded in joking, the study has highlighted the value of the contributions of Freire, (1972; 1974; 1978; 1995; 1997 (a); 1997 (b); 1998) Dewey (1916; 1934; 1938) and the philosophical contribution of Mark Johnson (1987) to a more bodily based theory of cognition.

The work of Freire, Dewey and Mark Johnson have not only served as useful theoretical and philosophical points of reference, their deployment in this study has demonstrated the critical role of established thinking about education and its capacity to continue to illuminate understanding in new ways.

This is of particular significance in the case of Dewey whose work is currently being re-visited by a new generation of scholars (Garrison 1995). The renewed interest in Dewey must be noted as it can be associated with contemporary pre-occupations with defining the nature, scope, and uses of education. From the 1970's to the present time discourses and debates about the inclusion of multi-culturalism in the curriculum and its role in the broader agenda of personal and social education have demonstrated the continued usefulness of Dewey's work and its capacity to address contemporary themes. (Ferguson, 1999)

For adult education practitioners, this shift in focus from learning to the broader discursive terrain of education is important and must be noted. Many contemporary theorists of experiential learning (Warner Weil and McGill 1989; Boud and Miller, 1996; Boud Keogh and Walker, 1985; Cohen and Walker, 1993) do not actually define the aims of experiential learning practice in educational terms. Instead the educational meanings of the practices they define are often implied rather than explicitly teased out.

This may be because much of what we do and talk about as adult education practitioners is framed in the discursive language of learning. Hence, we frequently ask how can we help students to learn, or the related question, how can we help students to learn better?

This implicit avoidance of the educational significance of what we do as adult education practitioners is in some ways understandable. The contentious and debatable definitions of the natural and normative self-directive capacities of adult learners (Knowles 1985; Knox 1989) and the related separation of adult education as a distinctive theoretical area has contributed to a somewhat cautious acknowledgment of the conceptual usefulness of recognizing "education" as a philosophical frame of reference. It may be that the traditional association of education with "schooling" shapes the tentative and somewhat anxious responses of adult education practitioners to the identification of their activities as being educational.

This study has contributed to an understanding of adult education practice by firmly locating both experiential learning and the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices within the broader context of education. The interpretative examination of the role and scope of Theatre of the Oppressed has provided an appropriate terrain upon which to acknowledge and critically appraise the social dimension of learning in the context of education.

As a practitioner in the area of adult education who works in the field of personal and management development, the interpretative focus of this study is both useful and instructive. By examining Theatre of the Oppressed as a pedagogical process I have developed a more critical understanding of experiential learning. The exploration of the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension has raised important questions about established understandings of transformative learning and the related facilitative practices.

On one hand, I have been unable to fully accept the focus of the critical trajectory of Usher and Edwards (1994). This is largely because their rejection of the influence of constructs drawn from the contemporary practice of psychology appears to overlook the educational significance of working with the affective and emotional components of experience. This omission is also demonstrated by much of theorizing about education that models itself on Freire's understanding of the critical role of education. (This does not mean Freire rejects the educational significance of the affective and creative dimensions of experience.)

On the other hand, the failure of many psychology based models of experiential learning practices to acknowledge the educational significance of social and political considerations is somewhat naive and unrealistic.

It is against this background that the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices can be seen as a dynamic synthesis of these traditionally conflicting perspectives. Boal's primary achievement is that he has combined the political aspirations of Freire's vision of education with a practical recognition of the capacity of therapeutic practices to address and work with the multi-dimensional structures of experience. This is a unique blend of considerations, especially for those of us who work in areas of change management and personal development. Most importantly, Boal's articulation of the formative role of his clearly stated activist agenda locates the practices in a distinctively radical political terrain.

Of course, I am unable to say that as a result of this study I will become an exclusive Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner; that was not my original intention. Yet, I do hope that my conceptual grasp of the educational role of the aesthetic dimension of experience has become clearer. By reflecting, theorizing and developing an interpretative reading of the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, I have acquired an overall understanding of some of the processes that facilitate the critical and transformative apprehension of social reality.

By seeking to theorize the dramatic process of Theatre of the Oppressed, a richer understanding of experiential learning has emerged.

The exploration of the educational significance of the aesthetic dimension of experience has extended and elaborated on my theoretical and philosophical understanding of the role and scope of education and its related practices. Hence the "illuminative projection" of the Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices within the context of a conceptual delineation of experiential learning has ultimately been an educational undertaking.

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NOTES

Chapter 1 - Introduction And Overview Of Study

- [1] See Chapter 1.5 Introductory Commentary - A Personal Narrative.
- [2] See Chapter 9 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Joking Motif As A Mode Of Critical Sensibility for a more detailed exposition of this theme.
- [3] This interpretative focus is explained in Chapter 1.3 Study Methodology and Chapter 5.2 Towards An Interpretative Framework - A Note On Methodology.
- [4] These anecdotal accounts: Chapter 1.5 Introductory Commentary - A Personal Narrative, Chapter 2.5 Commentary: Working With Experience Creatively - An Account of An Away-day Workshop, Chapter 4.3 Commentary - Working With Experience - An Innovative Approach To Training Needs Analysis.
- [5] Chapter 10 Experiential Learning - Towards A Conceptual Elaboration.
- [6] Cited in Human Nature and Conduct, (Dewey 1954) page 132.
- [7] Ibid
- [8] A number of contributors provide a broad range of models of experiential learning practice. These include: Brookfield (1996), Smythe (1996), Stalker (1996), Heron (1996), Petman (1996), Tisdell (1996), Ireland (1996), Brown (1996), Harris (1996), Mace (1996), Johnson (1996).
- [9] Again a variety of practitioners are drawn on: Brookfield (1993) Postle (1993), Mulligan (1993), Anderson (1993), Brew (1993), Thorpe (1993), Mason (1993), Miller (1993), Kasl (1993), Dechant and Marsick (1993), Criticos (1993), Usher (1996).
- [10] In this instance personal narratives perform the role of anecdotal case studies. Powell (1985), Reason and Smith (1985), Knights (1985), Main (1985), Candy, Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1985), Boxer (1985), Heron (1985), Kemmis (1985).
- [11] See Chapter 1.2 Study Outline.
- [12] Cited in Philosophical Research in Drama Education: The Case of Bailin (1996) page 231.
- [13] Ibid.
- [14] cited in the Gellnor's (1985), The Psych-Analytical Movement.
- [15] Here, I am locating Theatre of the Oppressed in the broader landscape of popular education. See Chapter 1.4.1 The Development of Theatre of the Oppressed As A Pedagogical Practice and Chapter 2.3 From Pedagogy of the Oppressed to Theatre of the Oppressed - Making The Connection.
- [16] In the Caribbean, the poetry of both Brathwaite (1969) and the recent Nobel prize winner Walcott, (1990) demonstrate a profound yearning for an authentic and relevant new world sensibility that draws on a distinctive aesthetic. The novels of Niyi Osundare (1962; 1973) Lamming (1979), and Lovelace (1997), and the plays of Hill (1972; 1985), Gibbons (1986) and Lovelace (1989; 1984) reflect these aspirations that can be seen as part of a broad pan American post colonial discourse.
- [17] See Chapter 8.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - From Spectacle To Ritual for a more detailed exploration of the educational significance of the material dimension of ritual.
- [18] Cited in Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal (1979), page 162.
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] Here, the context of the theatre is used to establish an interpretative framework that relies on "projective illumination", see Chapter 1.3 Study Methodology.
- [21] There has been a tendency to overlook the historical significance of Brazil's African population, the largest outside of Africa: Geipel (1997) explores this at length.

- [22] For example, in the play, the speech given by one of the important authorities who sought to put down the rebellion led by Zumbi was taken almost entirely from the contemporary newspaper clippings of speeches that were made during the period of the play's production.
- [23] Cited in *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal (1979), page 166.
- [26] Ibid.
- [24] See Chapter 9 The Joking Motif As A Mode Of Critical Sensibility.
- [25] See Chapter 6.4.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed - Forum Theatre. [26] See Chapter 6.3.2 Invisible Theatre.
- [27] See *Rainbow of Desire*, Boal (1995), page 8.
- [28] See Chapter 6 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Technology.
- [29] Cited in *Rainbow of Desires*, Boal (1995), page 3.
- [30] Ibid.
- [31] See Chapter 6.1.1 Forum Theatre.
- [32] See Chapter 6.1.2 "Cop In The Head Techniques".
- [33] See this study's account of the applications of experiential learning, Chapter 4.1.3 Experiential Learning For Social Change.
- [34] Cited in *Rainbow of Desires* (Boal 1995), page 7.
- [35] Cited in *The Text of Paulo Freire*, (Taylor 1993), page 10.
- [36] Cited in *Theatre of the Oppressed*, (Boal 1989), page 121.
- [37] Fanon (1970) is an important influence on the work of Freire.
- [38] Cited in *Theatre Of The Oppressed*, Boal (1979), page 155.
- [39] See 9.1 The Joking Motif As A Mode of Critical Sensibility.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review - Making Sense of Theatre of the Oppressed

- [1] See Theatre of The Oppressed, Boal (1979 Pluto Press 1st edition) - comments cited on the book cover.
- [2] Comment made by George E. Wellwarth cited at Ibid
- [3] Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1989) page (ix).
- [4] Ibid page xx
- [5] Here Boal is suggesting that theatre serves a primarily instructional purpose at a popular level.
- [6] Comment made by Schechner cited on the cover of Games for Actors and Non Actors. (Boal 1992)
- [7] See Chapter 6.2 Theatre As A Discursive Medium - Image Theatre provides a descriptive account of "image theatre".
- [8] Chapter 9.1 The Joking Motif As A Mode of Critical Sensibility.
- [9] Comment by Theatre Research International cited on the cover of the Games For Actors and Non Actors.
- [10] Both Chapter 6.2 Theatre as a Discursive Medium - Image Theatre and Chapter 8.1 The Representation of Experience explore the educational significance of the material body.
- [11] Cited in Rainbow of Desires Boal (1994), page xviii.
- [12] Chapter 7.1 The Aesthetic Space An Overview delineates and explores Boal's understanding of the aesthetic space at length.
- [13] It is quite clear that Boal draws extensively on Jungian understandings of the psycho-social.
- [14] See Chapter 2.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed As Delineated By Augusto Boal.
- [15] Cited in Identity, Culture and the Post Modern World, Sarup, (1996) page 48.
- [16] See Chapter 1.4.2 Biography, As A Discursive Framework -Improvisation As A Sustaining Theme of Theatre of the Oppressed.
- [17] See Chapter 4.1.5 Experiential Learning For Personal Growth And Development for a more detailed discussion of the area of experiential learning practice.
- [18] Here I am referring to Chapter 2.2 Theatre of the Oppressed: Case Studies, Practitioners Accounts, Commentaries.
- [19] Theatre in Education (TIE) is a significant area of compulsory level education. Jackson (1993) provides a comprehensive overview of the area.
- [20] Hodgson's (1972) edited collection of articles, The Uses of Drama - Acting As A Social And Educational Force, makes an invaluable contribution to the development of understanding in this area.
- [21] Here I am drawing attention to the long standing debate between Drama in Education and Theatre in Education practitioners and the implications of this debate for the current state of drama provision in British secondary schools. Hornbrook (1998) provides an evaluative account of these debates.
- [22] See Spolin (1963), Johnstone (1981), Burgess and Gandy (1989), Hodgson (1972), Booth Martin, Smith (1988).
- [23] Some of the main contributions to the area include Jennings (1990), Gersie and King (1990), Jennings et al (1987), Jennings and Minde (1993).
- [24] See Magill and Muldon (1997), Poulter (1997), Khan (1997), Hickson (1997), Cohen and King (1997).
- [25] This is Michael Etherton's description of Third World Popular Theatre cited in the Cambridge Guide to World Theatre (1988) edited by Martin Branham and published by the Cambridge University Press.
- [26] See Harding (1994), Laws (1994), Musa (1994).

[27] See *Rainbow of Desire* (Boal 1995), page 67.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Here I am seeking to relate the carnivalesque implications of Theatre of the Oppressed to established discourses about the literary, cultural, political and critical significance of carnival.

[30] My own exploration (Ferguson 1999) of the Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace's (1997) novel *Salt*, seeks to demonstrate the significance of the carnivalesque aesthetic and its capacity to function as a metaphor that defines the forms of apprehension required to develop and convey the values that underpin multi-cultural aspirations in the area of education.

[31] Guingane (1997) explains that these performances enable members of the community to step outside the boundaries that sustain behavioral norms and express desires and intentions that are normally subjected to strict social sanctions.

[32] Fisher's (1994) input is particularly significant for this study, as she is one of the few contributors to *Playing Boal, Theatre, Therapy, Activism* (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994) who works in the area of post compulsory schooling as a practitioner in adult and continuing education.

[33] While agreeing with the overall aim of Boal's contribution to the area of Drama in Education, Winston (1998) draws attention to a number of contradictions in Boal's theorizing of theatre.

[34] In general these critics are supportive of Theatre of the Oppressed, the reservations they raise are part of a healthy critical process of adaptation. (Fisher 1994; Winston 1998; Spry 1994; Salverson 1994)

[35] See Chapter 1.4.1 The Development of Theatre Of The Oppressed As A Pedagogical Practice.

[36] There is a substantial body of work by Paulo Freire (1972; 1978; 1979; 1997; 1998; Figueiredo and Gastaldo 1995).

[37] Cited in The Text of Paulo Freire (Taylor 1993) page 34.

[38] See Chapter 5.1.1 Defining Experiential Knowledge In The Context Of Experiential Learning and Chapter 10.1.1 Experiential Knowledge As Being Multi-dimensional.

[39] Morrison's (1997) comments, cited in McConkey's (1996), *The Anatomy of Memory - An Anthology*, are useful here as they highlight the instructive role of art and its capacity to articulate and explore issues in ways that move beyond everyday patterns of discourse. More importantly, Morrison's comments illustrate the capacity of art to convey social meaning. This corresponds closely with Boal's understanding of the role of theatre see Chapter 2.1.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed

[40] Chapter 2.2.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed-The Multi-Disciplinary Implications, Chapter 5.1.2 Experiential Learning - A Consideration of Cognition In The Context Of Experiential Learning, Chapter 8.1 Re-presentation, A Consideration of The Significance of Form and Chapter 10.1 Cognition As Thinking all provide interpretative elaborations of Mark Johnson's (1997) contribution.

Chapter 3 - Experiential Learning - An Overview

- [1] Here Jarvis is referring to a delineation of experience and its modes by Oakshott (1933).
- [2] This is referred to in Chapter 5.1 Introductory Commentary - A Personal Narrative.
- [3] See Chapter 5.1.4 A Consideration of Reflective Practice within the context of Experiential Learning and Chapter 10.1.4 Reflective practice as the Joking Of Memory for a more detailed review of the role of memory in experiential learning.
- [4] Mezirow draws on theories about the re-alignment of personal constructs developed by Candy (1981) in the context of adult education.
- [5] More recently, the emergence of feminist pedagogies (Gilligan 1982; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule 1986; Taylor 1995; Taylor and Marieneau 1995 Tisdell 1993) have given rise to theorizing about the experience of women and consequently the further elaboration of the nature and scope of experiential learning.
- [6] See Usher and Edwards (1993) for a discussion of the defining role of statutory provisions on experiential learning.
- [7] See Theory In Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness. (Argyris and Schon 1974)
- [8] See Chapter 1.3 Study Methodology and Chapter 5.1.3 A Consideration Of Constructivist Teaching Practices In The Context Of Experiential Learning and 10.1.3 Joking As A Constructivist Practice.
- [9] Democracy In Education (Dewey 1938)
- [10] Much of the theorizing in the area of Experiential Learning pays scant attention to the broad body of Dewey work that incorporates a vast array of themes that include art, democracy and the challenges of modernity.
- [11] See Journal Of Staff Development, National Staff Development Council No 9 Summer (1988)
- [12] Keeton (1976)
- [13] Brookfield (1986)
- [14] Lewis and Willians (1994)
- [15] Despite its popularity and widespread influence, Kolb's theory of experiential learning is not the sole delineation of the process of experiential learning.
- [16] See Making Sense of Experiential Learning Warner Weil and McGill (1989) page 3.
- [17] Here, I am drawing attention to the failure of the definition to address the process of experiential learning.

Chapter 4 - Experiential Learning - Practices and Applications

- [1] The defining role of context is raised in Chapter 3.1 The Challenge of Theorizing Experiential Learning.
- [2] See Chapter 3.3 Experiential Learning Practices - As An Elaboration On A Theme for an indication of the defining influence of Dewey on prevailing understandings of Experiential Learning.
- [3] Here I am referring to the way in which Kolb's model of experiential learning is effectively a delineation of a cycle process of reflection.
- [4] In Chapter 2.5 Creative Forms of Expression and the Articulation of Difference. Preston explores the way in which the language of theory can exclude the voices of those who are oppressed and marginalized.
- [5] See Chapter 3.3 Theorizing Experiential Learning-The Political Implications.
- [6] See Theory In Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness. (Argyris and Schon 1974).
- [7] Chapter 5.1.4 provides a detailed review of reflective practice in the context of experiential learning.
- [8] This study provides a detailed exploration of Bateson's perspective in Chapter 1.5.
- [9] Usher (1992) Usher (1993) Usher and Edwards (1994) support this position.
- [10] Both Collins (1991) and Taylor (1992) have expressed concern about the ways in which the popularisation wide spread adoption of Freire's pedagogical principles have resulted in distortions and over-simplistic understandings.
- [11] See Chapter 2 for a literature review of this area.
- [12] See Chapter 2.1.1 for an outline of the way in which Theatre Of The Oppressed promotes and works with these aspects of social learning.
- [13] Brah and Hoy (1989) are particularly clear on this point. [14] In both Pedagogy of the Heart (1997) and Teachers as Cultural Workers Freire (1998) talks extensively and repeatedly about the emotion/feeling dimension of a radical pedagogy.
- [15] The main problem here touches on the central concern of this study, the lack of acknowledgement of the multi-dimensional nature of the process of learning and the capacity of experiential approaches to the promotion of learning to bring this to the fore.
- [16] In a sense we see that Freire uses dialogue as a mode of "anthropological" inquiry. The investigative focus of the "image theatre" practices also rely on the adoption of this anthropological approach to inquiry.
- [17] This is explored in detail in Chapter 8.1. McLaren's (1993) work draws attention to the ways in which oppressive practices can become psychologically internalized through bodily subjugation.
- [18] Chapter 2.2 Theatre of the Oppressed Case Studies, Practitioners Accounts and Commentaries provides a review of the literature in this area.
- [19] As previously noted in Chapter 2.3 From Pedagogy of the Oppressed to Theatre of the Oppressed - Making the Connection, Taylor (1992) clearly explains that Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed system of practices arise out of the innovative approach to pedagogy outlined by Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
- [20] Here, I am relating Boal's (1979) understanding of the role of the arts in the consideration of working out of "virtu" (see Chapter 2.1.1 Theatre of the Oppressed) to Dewey's theoretical and philosophical exposition of the role of the affective domain in the process of thinking (outlined in How we Think Dewey. (1933)
- [21] This is explored in the Literature Review of this study Chapter 2.2 Theatre of the Oppressed, Case Studies, Practitioners Accounts, Commentaries.

[22] Rainbow of Desires (Boal 1995) page 115.

[23] Senge (1992) is a good example of an entire training and development approach that draws extensively on the ideas and perspectives developed in the area of Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Development and Growth.

[24] In a sense Mezirow (1990) distorts the social and political aspirations for radical change expressed in the work of Habermas.

[25] See Chapter 5.1.4 A Consideration of Reflective Practice within the context of Experiential Learning for a full discussion of critical reflection.

[26] Tisdell (1993) makes an important distinction between approaches to women's development that could be associated with Village Three, Experiential Learning for Social Change and the practices that could be associated with Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Development. Here Tisdell (1993) defines the tension between these conflicting perspectives by critically evaluating the conservative ethos of the popular self empowerment principles reflected in the delineation of feminist pedagogy offered by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986). **See Chapter 4.1.3 Experiential Learning For Social Change**, for a full exploration of the problems raised by this understanding of personal development in the context of education.

I would also like to suggest that while Fiddler and Marienau (1995) and Marienau (1995) highlight the way in which gender determines the nature of the social and political experience women bring to learning, their emphasis on facilitating understanding and empowerment at a personal level does not completely exclude the possibility of using education as the context within which to address broader social and political issues.

[27] See Chapter 7.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview for a full delineation of the way in which the Theatre of the Oppressed practices rely on the facilitative "properties" of the aesthetic space.

[28] Chapter 5.1 Experiential Learning - A Conceptual Framework explores and elaborates on this model.

CHAPTER 5 Experiential Learning – Towards A Conceptual Framework

[1] This is a partial reference to a larger model developed by Jackson and Mac Isaac (1994). In their article, Introduction to a New Approach to Experiential Learning, they identify and define what can be described as the salient features of experiential learning and relate these to various sources and influences in the area of adult and continuing education.

[2] By focusing on the exploration of the way in which experiential learning practices implicitly defines knowledge; interprets cognition; draws on constructivist teaching practices and practice reflection, this study will develop a conceptual understanding of experiential learning practices. I wish to argue that this is a useful framework for making sense of educational implications of Theatre of the Oppressed and its reliance on the aesthetic domain of experience.

[3] See Chapter 3.1 The Challenge of Theorizing Experiential Learning

[4] See Chapter 3.3 Experiential Learning Practices An Elaboration On A Theme.

[5] For example readings by post modernist, (Usher 1993; 1995) feminist (Tisdell 1993; Hart 1985) and anti-racist paradigms of knowledge and knowledge making (Brah and Hoy 1989)

[6] Here I am referring to Freire's radical reworking of the nature and scope of education. This was explored in Chapter 2.3 From Pedagogy Of The Oppressed To Theatre Of The Oppressed – Making The Connection.

[7] See Chapter 4.1.1 Experiential Learning And The Accreditation of Prior Learning for a detailed commentary.

[8] See Chapter 4.1.1 Experiential Learning and Post schooling Education and Training.

[9] It should be understood that Ann Weaver Hart (1990) uses these distinctions in order to explain the various ways in which effective educational and administrative practices require the recognition of multiple approaches to knowing and defining knowledge.

[10] See Chapter 4.2 Evaluating The Descriptive Typology.

[11] Kolb (1984) like Dewey (1938) in the earlier part of the century reaches towards a definition of knowledge that reflects the dynamics of modernity and one that is open to constant re-negotiation.

[12] The educational significance of Action Science as a mode of inquiry has been explored elsewhere in this study Chapter 4.1.2 Experiential Learning In The Context of Post Compulsory Education And Training and Chapter 4.1.5 Experiential Learning For Personal.

[13] See Chapter 4.1.5 Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development for a more detailed account of Salmon's (1989) contribution use of role plays to encourage learners to incorporate and make explicit their emotional responses to social situations.

[14] See Chapter 1.1 Scope Of Study and Chapter 1.5 Introductory Commentary – Personal Narrative for a more detailed exploration of the educational significance of the affective domain in the context of equal opportunities, race awareness and the development of multi-cultural perspectives.

[15] See Chapter 2.1.3 Rainbow Of Desire for an indication of the dramatic significance of the role of the protagonist's "will".

[16] In, The Rationality: Understanding The Arts In Education, Best (1992) explains that the arts are fully open to objective reasoning.

[17] See Chapter 2.4 Creative Forms Of Expression And The Articulation Of Difference.

- [18] See Chapters 7.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview, 8.1 The Presentation of Experience and Chapter 9.1 The Joking Motif As A Mode of Critical Sensibility.
- [19] Mezirow's understanding of perspective transformation draws on Candy's reframing of Kelly's work in the construct theory.
- [20] Here participatory research refers to a collaborative approach to the conduct of an inquiry that is grounded in Action Science methodology. (Watkins and Brooks 1994)]
- [21] See Chapter 4.1.1 Experiential Learning And The Accreditation Of Prior Learning for a fuller account of Paczuska's work in the area of APEL
- [22] See Chapter 4.1.3 Experiential Learning For Social Change.
- [23] As previously indicated Mulligan (1993) and Heron (1993) are two experiential learning theorists who support the use of reflective practices that draw on creative modes of expression and communication e.g. drama, art, expressive movement
- [24] See Chapter 2.5 Commentary: Working With Experience Creatively - An Account Of An Away Day Retreat Workshop for examples of reflective practices that draw on the creative expressive modes of drama and movement.
- [25] See Chapter 7.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview, for an exploration of the educational role of memory.
- [26] See Chapter 6.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview for an account of the way in which the aesthetic dimensions of experience draw on memory in order to infuse experience with meaning.
- [27] See Chapter 10.4 Reflective Practice As The Joking Of Memory for further elaboration.
- [28] Chapter 4, Experiential Learning - Practices And Applications focuses on this descriptive delineation of experiential learning.
- [29] See Chapter 1.3 Study Methodology for an introductory review of the interpretative approach that defines this study.
- [30] Both Chapter 5 Experiential Learning Towards A Conceptual Framework and Chapter 10 Experiential Learning Towards a Conceptual Elaboration rely extensively on Dewey's work.
- [31] See Chapter 6.3 Theatre As A Discursive Medium - Image Theatre.

Chapter 6 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Technology

- [1] See Chapter 2.2.1 Theatre Of The Oppressed: - Case Studies, Practitioners Accounts, Commentaries.
- [2] See Theatre Of The Oppressed (Boal 1979) page 141.
- [3] Ibid., page 141 - 142.
- [4] See Rainbow Of Desire (Boal 1995) page 7.
- [5] See Chapter 1.4.1. the Development of Theatre Of The Oppressed As A Pedagogical Practice, and Chapter 2.1.3 Rainbow of Desire, for an account circumstances under which the "cop in head" techniques emerged.
- [6] See Patterson (1996) page 3.
- [7] Here the "cop in the head" techniques avoid the "confessional" mode that is usually associated with therapeutic practices and the related psychology based framework on which much of Village Four, Experiential Learning for Personal Growth is associated.
- [8] See Rainbow of Desire Boal (1995).
- [9] Chapter 2.2.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - A Critical Commentary for an exploration of the problems some practitioners have encountered with the Forum techniques.
- [10] See Chapter 7.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview, for a detailed account of the facilitative role of the creative sensibilities.
- [11] See Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1994) page 77.
- [12] See Theatre Of The Oppressed (Boal 1989) page 125.
- [13] Ibid. page 127.
- [14] See Chapter 2.4 Creative Forms Of Expression And Articulation Of Difference for a more detailed account of educational implications of Johnson's account of cognition that effectively locates the body in the mind.
- [15] See Chapter 2.1.2 Games For Actors And Non Actors.
- [16] Here I am referring to Boal's understanding of "joking" that is outlined in Chapter 1.4.1 The Development of Theatre Of The Oppressed As a Pedagogical Practice and Chapter 9.1 The Joking Motif As A Carnavalesque Critical Sensibility.
- [17] See Chapters 4.1.3 Experiential Learning for Social Change and 4.1.4 Experiential Learning for Social Change - Towards A Delineation of the Therapeutic Dimension.
- [18] op. cit. supra. [13], page 128.
- [19] See Chapter 1.4.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - Biography As A Reflective Framework. According to Epskamp (1989), the newspaper report that provided information on the most recent budgetary cuts and the need for economic conservation was accompanied by a lengthy and dramatized re-presentation of the lavish dinner enjoyed by the Minister of Finance on the previous evening.
- [20] See Games For Actors and Non Actors, (Boal 1992) page 22.
- [21] See Theatre Of the Oppressed (Boal 1979) page 150.
- [22] See Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1995) page xix.

Chapter 7 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Aesthetic Space

- [1] cited in The Fifth Discipline Field Book (Senge et al 1994), page 29
- [2] cited in Rainbow Of Desire (1995), page 18.
- [3] Ibid, page 16.
- [4] op.cit. supra. page 16.
- [5] Samuel T. Coleridge in defining the role of the imagination in creativity he refers to the willing "suspension of disbelief".
- [6] cited in Aesthetics (Courtney, 1997).
- [7] cited in Rainbow Of Desire, (Boal 1995), page 21.
- [8] See Chapter 5.1.1 Defining Knowledge In The Context Of Experiential Learning.
- [9] Here Winston (1998) uses the techniques of process drama developed in the area of Drama in Education. See Chapter 2.2.1 Theatre of the Oppressed - Case Studies.
- [10] See Chapter 4.1.4 Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development
- [11] See Rainbow Of Desire, (Boal 1995), page 23
- [12] This refers to theorists like Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) Mezirow (1982) Kolb (1984).
- [13] See Education For Critical Consciousness, (Freire 1974) page 105.
- [14] See Rainbow Of Desire (Boal 1995), page 13.
- [15] Ibid., page 26.
- [16] op.cit. supra, page 23.
- [17] op.cit. supra, page 13.
- [18] op.cit. supra.
- [19] Here I am refering to work by Mezirow (1992) and Candy (1981).
- [20] See Education For Critical Consciousness (Freire 1974), page 111.
- [21] See Chapter 1.3 Study Methodology, for an exploration of deliberative reflection.
- [22] Here, I am drawing on conceptual formulation of Performance explored by Carlson (1996) in, Performance: A Critical Introduction. For an elaboration of these themes within this study, see Chapter 2.2.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Multi-dimensional Implications, Chapter 2.2.3 Theatre Of The Oppressed - The Carnavalesque Implications and 9.2 Joking As a carnivalesque Critical Sensibility.
- [23] See Rainbow Of Desire (1995), page 28.
- [24] Ibid.
- [25] See Education For Critical Consciousness (Freire 1974), page 155
- [26] See Chapter 4.1.4 Experiential Learning For Personal Development and Growth.
- [27] We can relate the model developed by Argyris and Schon (1974) to the practices of Village Four, Experiential Learning For Personal Growth and Development.
- [28] See Theatre Of The Oppressed (Boal 1979), page 29.
- [29] See Courier UNESCO (Boal 1997).
- [30] See The Aesthetic Dimension - Towards A Critique Of Marxist Aesthetics (Marcuse 1979) page 5. Herbert Marcuse explores the nature of aesthetics Here, I am specifically refering to contribution of theorists like Usher (1993) Usher and Edwards (1994) explored in Chapter 4.1.3 Experiential Learning For Social Change.
- [31] Here I am seeking to extend everyday and common sense understandings of education that tend to focus on propositional knowledge.

Chapter 8 Theatre Of The Oppressed And The Re-presentation of Experience

- [1] See Rainbow Of Desire (Boal 1995) page 14.
- [2] See Chapter 5.1.4 A Consideration Of Reflective Practice In the Context Of Experiential Learning.
- [3] See Chapter 4.1.1 Experiential Learning And The Accreditation Of Prior Learning.
- [4] See Chapter 4.1.3 Experiential Learning For Social Change.
- [5] See When Memory Speaks (Conway 1998), page 178.
- [6] Ibid.
- [7] Ibid.
- [8] Ibid.
- [9] See Chapter 2.1.1. Theatre Of The Oppressed.
- [10] See Drama, Narrative And Moral Education, (Winston 1998) page 133.
- [11] Theatre Of The Oppressed Boal, (1979) page x.
- [12] See Chapter 1.3 Study Methodology and Chapter 5.2 Towards An Interpretative Framework - A Note On Methodology.
- [13] See Rituals/Spectacles Handelman (1997) page 388
- [14] Ibid.
- [15] See Theatre of Oppressed (Boal 1979) page 119.

Chapter 9 Towards The Carnavalesque - An Exploration of the Joking Motif As A Mode Of Critical Sensibility

- [1] See Rainbow of Desire (Boal 1995) page 72.
- [2] See Chapter 1.1 Scope of Study for an exploration of the educational implications of moral learning and the promotion of moral agency.
- [3] See Chapter 2.4 Creative Forms Of Expression And The Articulation Of Difference, for an exploration of the role of the critical sensibilities.
- [4] See Theatre Of The Oppressed (Boal 1979), page 182.
- [5] See Chapter 7.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview for a full description of the plasticity, dichotomy and the teleological features or properties of the aesthetic space.
- [6] Ibid.
- [7] Ibid. page 175.
- [8] In Chapter 1.4.1 The Development Of Theatre Of The Oppressed As A Pedagogical Practice there is full account of the significance of the Arena Tells About Zumbi. This is further elaborated on in, Chapter 2.1.1 Theatre Of the Oppressed where Boal's essay about the production is briefly reviewed.
- [9] op. cit. supra.
- [10] See Chapter 6.1.1 Forum Theatre for a descriptive outline of the nature and of Forum Theatre.
- [11] See Chapter 5.1.3 A Consideration Of Constructivist Teaching Practices In The Context Of Experiential Learning for an evaluative exploration of constructivist teaching practices.
- [12] See Angela Brew's account of "unlearning" in Unlearning From Experience (Brew 1993).
- [13] See Chapter 7.1 The Aesthetic Space - An Overview, for an exploration of the way in which these properties of the "aesthetic space" work.
- [14] See Theatre Of The Oppressed, Boal (1979) page 182.
- [15] Ibid.
- [16] This illustration of the social role of the carnivalesque provided by Guingane (1997) has been referred to previously in this study, see Chapter 2.2.2 Theatre Of The Oppressed -The Multi-Dimensional Implications. The global nature of the carnivalesque tradition is demonstrated by this example.

Chapter 10 - Experiential Learning Towards A Conceptual Elaboration

- [1] This conceptualization of the nature of the reflective deliberation involved in the process of moral learning is used repeatedly in this study. For a fuller exploration see Chapter 5.1.2 A Consideration Of Cognition In The Context Of Experiential Learning.
- [2] See, Rehearsal in Moral Education in, (ed.) J. Garrison, The New Scholarship on Dewey, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, page 213-227
- [3] See Educating the Moral Artist, S. Fesmire (1995)
- [4] See The Body In The Mind: The Bodily Basis Of Meaning, Imagination And Reason, (Mark Johnson 1987) page 29.
- [5] See Chapter 9.1 The Joking Motif As A Mode Of Critical Sensibility.
- [6] See Chapter 6.3.6 Rituals And Masks.
- [7] See Chapter 2.4 Creative Forms Of Expression And The Articulation Of Difference.
- [8] See Chapter 5.1.4 A Consideration Of Reflective Practices In The Context Of Experiential Learning, for an exploration of the role of memory in experiential learning practice.
- [8] This is explored in Chapter 8.1 The Representation Of Experience. Specific reference was made to Conway's exploration of narrative forms and women's representation of the self in the context of autobiography.
- [9] See Chapter 6.2 Theatre As A Discursive Medium - Image Theatre, for an account of the "language" of Image Theatre.
- [10] See Memory: Luba Art And The Making Of History, (Roberts and Roberts in African Arts, Winter 1996) for a descriptive account of the Lukasa and its role in the culture of the Luba people of Zaire.
- [11] See Chapter 6.2 Theatre As A Discursive Medium - Image Theatre, for an exploration of non-verbal language of image theatre and see Chapter 2.4 Creative Forms Of Expression And The Articulation Of Difference, for an exploration of the problems of theorizing socially constructed differences.
- [12] See Chapter 8.1 The Representation of Experience .

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